

# Religatum de Pelle Humana

NO, YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC LIBRARY doesn't have one. Nevertheless, if American librarianship is to be all things to all men, some one of its practitioners should make some effort at least to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of readers who would get to the bottom of the matter once and for all. I refer to the problem of anthropodermic bibliopeggy, a subject which haunts the world of bookmen and not infrequently finds its way into the columns of their journals as a sly rumor. But he who is determined to get at the real story will discover that the macabre art of leatherwork in the tanned human integument has a long history as folklore and propaganda in addition to the more "refined" traditions created by the bibliopegistic dandies of the nineteenth century.

The custom of flaying the sacrilegious and tanning their impious hides has roots in Greek antiquity. According to Phrygian legend, the Silenus Marsyas, god of the river of the same name, made so bold as to challenge Apollo to a contest with the lyre and, upon losing, suffered the indignity of being flayed.<sup>1</sup> Apollo hung the skin in the market place at Celaenae, and it was still being shown there in Xenophon's day. Ctesippus did not approve of the disposition of Marsyas' mortal remains; for Plato makes him say in *Euthydemus*<sup>2</sup>: "They may skin me alive, if only my skin is made at last, not like that of Marsyas, into a leathern bottle, but into a piece of virtue."

Herodotus<sup>3</sup> advised that the Scythians made covers for their quivers, cloaks, and "napkins" (χειρόμακτρον) of human skin; and he goes on to say that they went to the extreme of flaying the entire body, even to the finger nails, and stretching the tanned skin upon a wooden frame (διατείναντε ἐπὶ ξύλωου) for

exhibition as a trophy. Cambyses ordered the flaying of Sisamnes, father of Otanes, and his skin stretched across the seat of the throne on which he sat in judgment. The son, who succeeded his father by special dispensation, was enjoined to remember what he was sitting on when making his decisions. (Herodotus, v, 25).

Our Anglo-Saxon forebears were no less savage in their treatment of marauding Danes who violated their places of worship. The early volumes of *Notes and Queries* are full of references to human skin nailed to church doors in Hadstock, Copford, Worcester, Southwark, Rochester, and elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> Samuel Pepys was not merely propagating idle rumor when he wrote on April 10, 1661: "To Rochester, and there saw the Cathedral; then away thence observing the great doors of the church, as they say, covered with the skins of the Danes." The human skin nailed to the doors of St. Saviour's Church in Southwark was in the Guildhall Museum before the Blitz<sup>5</sup>; but it is altogether possible that the unknown Teutonic marauder to whom it once belonged has met with final destruction at the hands of one of his own descendants. Gilbert Scott found the skins of robbers which Edward I had nailed on the door of the Chapel of the Pyx in Westminster Abbey as posthumous punishment for abstracting the royal treasure.<sup>6</sup> Frank Buckland, the nineteenth-century naturalist whose father was dean of Westminster, has told the story that in his own day a piece of hard dry skin was found underneath the bossed head of a huge iron nail that was fixed upon the door of the Abbey's Chapter House. John Quekett, then assistant conservator of the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, recognized it as the skin of a blond person, probably by discovery of vestigial remnants of hair by means of microscopic examination.<sup>7</sup>

Folk beliefs which may have their roots in times which we do not care to recall in all their details are full of human skin legends. German Swiss peasants relate that a wicked shepherd was once skinned by spirits and his skin spread out on the roof of an Alpine hut.<sup>8</sup> Gypsy legend tells of a fair

princess who was turned into an old woman and placed in solitary confinement with her skin hung in a secret room; but she was finally released from her curse when a generous youth paid court to her.<sup>9</sup>

A widespread medieval belief that girdles of human skin aided in childbirth was gleefully repeated by those pornographers *par excellence*, Herman Ploss and Max and Paul Bartels.<sup>10</sup>

The ancient Nordic peoples were fascinated by the notion of slipping out of one's skin.<sup>11</sup> One Icelandic yarn tells of a girl who stepped out of the soles of her feet and made seven-league boots of them with which she could travel over land and sea. Another Scandinavian saga tells of a thrall who was bound to serve his master until his shoes wore out, but the latter, being made of human skin, were indestructible. It was held to be fatal ever to step on hallowed ground (premises of churches and cemeteries) with such foot-wear. A lucky sixpence was readily available to the Norseman who had breeches made out of human skin, and not infrequently two friends entered into a bargain agreeing that the first who died would surrender his skin to the other for appropriate use. Unfortunately, once the pants are donned, they grow to the body. The lucky sixpence itself had to be stolen from a poverty-stricken widow during the reading of the Gospels in a church. The only way to get rid of these devil's breeches was to persuade some other witless materialist to take them over; and once the latter had his right leg in the left side of the enchanted pants, he would never be free of his malefactor until he got the other leg in the right side. Another widespread superstition in the ancient North held that a magic carpet could be made from the dorsal skin of a dead man. Reminiscent of the sacrilegious aspects of these heathen Scandinavian beliefs is the passage in *Là-bas* where J. K. Huysmans gloats on a book binding in the skin of an unbaptized infant with a panel stamp representing a Host blessed in the Black Mass.<sup>12</sup>

By way of warning to British and American law enforcement officers in Germany, it is suggested that the manufacture

of anthropodermic girdles be made a penal offense inasmuch as medieval Germans argued that such a garment was the password to lycanthropy.<sup>13</sup>

But even Jerry believes in punishment of the wicked, for a legend from the Upper Palatinate holds that the Devil took the skin of a wicked landlord who had "skinned" his own tenants without mercy (if we may be permitted to translate in this manner the German pun on *schinden*, which has the double meaning of "flay" and "oppress.") A Count von Erbach of Odenwald in Hessa ordered sportsman's breeches to be made out of his skin after his death; and another charming Hessian custom was the manufacture of belts, suspenders, and knife sheaths from the booty of blood feuds.<sup>14</sup>

The medieval man also liked to toy with the idea of human parchment as a medium for writing. It has been alleged that one Mexican calendar on human parchment is in the Saxon State Library in Dresden and that another is in Vienna, but there is no evidence that the Aztecs were familiar with this aspect of the art.<sup>15</sup> The Japanische Palais, quondam home of the Sächsische Landesbibliothek, is now a pile of rubble, and surviving staff members have indicated that they have more important tasks than to answer queries of curious Americans. I am personally inclined to believe that the beautiful thirteenth century Bible in the Bibliothèque Nationale (fonds Sorbonne no. 1297) is on parchment from a still-born Irish lamb, as Gayet de Sansale maintained, rather than on *peau de femme*, as the Abbé Rive would have us believe. Nevertheless, the sage Gayet advised that another thirteenth century Bible which was in his custody (fonds Sorbonne no. 1625) and a text of the Decretals (fonds Sorbonne no. 1625) were written on human skin.<sup>16</sup>

Alfred Franklin gossiped after Granier de Cassagnac's questionable pamphlet on the Directory that some copies of one edition of the French Constitution were written or printed on human skin.<sup>17</sup>

But one of the most astounding tales is that of the wanderer Icelander Jón Olafsson ("Indiafári") who gravely tries to

pawn off the story of three anthropodermic books owned by a Coromandel Coast sorcerer.<sup>18</sup> Allegedly they were written on a special kind of parchment three centuries old. This parchment was of human skin, and pull as one might, it would always spring back into its proper shape. The elasticity of human skin will be verified by any of us who may have been raised in a small town in the South and can remember the local Negro who could get four golf balls inside of his mouth at one time. A. M. Villon says that an eighteenth century glutton named Tarare could get twelve eggs and twelve apples into his mouth.<sup>19</sup>

Beginning in the Middle Ages and going on through the seventeenth century, the notion of completely tanned human skins has kept a firm hold on the medical as well as the lay mind. How many of us have not heard the tale of some "leather general" that a pilgrim to the centers of Kultur has found (probably the ones in the Zittauer Ratsbibliothek,<sup>20</sup> the University of Basel's Museum of Natural History, or the University of Göttingen)? M. Ulric-Richard Desaix, a direct descendant of the famous general of the First French Republic, informed the anonymous authority who wrote for the *Chronique Médicale*<sup>21</sup> that in 1874 he saw a whole human hide of a thirty-year-old man at a country fair in Châteauroux and that subsequently that same hide was exhibited in Le Havre in an "Anthropological, Anatomical, and Ethnological Museum."

The vault of the church of Poppelsdorf (near Bonn) is said to contain the dried (not mummified) bodies of some twenty monks in full cowl and cassock<sup>22</sup>; and the Capuchin Convent in Valetta preserved a number of desiccated former inmates.<sup>23</sup> Another yarn picked up by an Englishman on his *grand tour* tells of "the cave" adjoining a church in Bordeaux containing about seventy "perfectly tanned" human bodies.<sup>24</sup> In 1684 Sir Robert Viner, that loyal alderman of London, gave Bodley's Library a tanned human skin as well as a human skeleton and the dried body of a Negro boy.<sup>25</sup> His generosity was matched by William Harvey who gave the College of Phys-

icians a tanned human skin. Another fully tanned skin is in the Physiological Museum of the Lyceum of Versailles. A Dr. Downing of Stourbridge preserved in a sumac solution the entire skin of William Waite, executed in Worcester about 1826 for murder.<sup>26</sup> Edouard Harlé reported that he had seen in the Museo Zootécnico of Barcelona the tanned skins of a Negro man and a white woman.<sup>27</sup>

One of the most fanciful tales that the Middle Ages can offer on the tanning of human skin is that of the Hussite General John Ziska. Robert Burton put the incident to good rhetorical use: "As the great Captain Zisca would have a drum made of his skin when he was dead, because he thought the very noise of it would put his enemies to flight, I doubt not but these following lines, when they shall be recited, or hereafter read, will drive away melancholy (though I be gone) as much as Zisca's drum could terrify his foes."<sup>28</sup>

Johann Staricius' *Neuermehrter Heldenschatz*<sup>29</sup> is one of the earliest complete accounts of this somewhat doubtful but nonetheless colorful story, and Staricius probably found the tale in some more extensive Czech account. Carlyle condemned the story as "fabulous, though in character with Ziska" in his biography of Frederick the Great.<sup>30</sup> The grossly vulgar *Tetoniana* of G. J. Witkowski has a fanciful illustration of Ziska's drum indicating that it was made of the skin of his chest.<sup>31</sup> Walter Hart Blumenthal and Paul Kersten try to convince their readers that the "Janizary drum" made of Ziska's skin is presently in the Bavarian Armeemuseum, although it has been almost three-quarters of a century now since Gustave Pawlowski informed the gullible that the Bohemian historian Palacky had disproved the legend.<sup>32</sup> Ziska was emulated in the rather mock heroic gesture of a French Republican (a royalist according to Essad Bey) who fell at Nantes in 1793. He ordered a drum to be made of his tanned skin. His skin was indeed tanned, even to his nails, and preserved in the Nantes Museum of Natural History, but no drum was ever made of it.<sup>33</sup>

Apropos of Witkowski's version of Ziska's drum, it is worth

only a passing note to call attention to the erotomaniacs who have played with the human hide in their own peculiar way. Isidore Liseux, the nineteenth-century Parisian publisher of erotic books, and the Concourt brothers<sup>34</sup> started enough rumors about this sort of thing to keep the devotees of the *Intermédiaire* busy for two generations. Lest anyone doubt the wildest tales of erotic bibliopeggy, he need only consult Ernest de Crauzat's investigation of modern French binding.

Many physicians have wallets and cigarette cases which are reminiscent of unsuccessful professional activity (and/or unpaid bills?). The nineteenth-century doorkeeper of the anatomical classroom in the College of Edinburgh used to carry a pocket-book made of the skin of the murderer of William Burke<sup>35</sup> who was executed in that city in 1829 (for "Burkeing") and, in wax effigy, used to terrify visitors to pre-Hitler London at Mme. Tussaud's. In 1937 Mr. W. F. Kaynor, president of the Waterbury Button Company, presented the U.S. National Museum with a piece of leather from human skin and a billfold made from the grain surface of such leather. A billfold known far and wide in upper New York State may be found in the bar of Rattlesnake Pete in Rochester, where it rests in archival repose on the basis of a rumor that it is made of a Negro's skin. A cuirass with straps and other accessories was made from the beautifully tattooed skin of a convict who died at the penitentiary at St. Mary á la Comte in the middle of the last century.<sup>36</sup> The Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 was a happy hunting ground for the devotees of articles from anthropodermic leather. Besides a pack of forty playing cards allegedly made of human leather and taken by the U.S. Army as loot from an Indian tribe, there was also a small pair of boots whose tops were made of human skin. The latter were exhibited by the manufacturers, M. and A. Mahrenholz of New York, and were subsequently presented to the U.S. National Museum.

Footwear has played an important role in the history of the industrial use of human leather in America. The most famous incident involving anthropodermic footwear was the notorious

Tewksbury affair which caused a great rumpus in Massachusetts after the supervisory board of the Tewksbury Almshouse had been suspended by Governor Benjamin F. Butler on April 23, 1883. It was charged that practical use had been made of the tanned hides of deceased inmates, part of whose mortal remains had allegedly been sold to local tanners serving the shoe industry. According to a galley sheet entitled "Human Hide Industry," a copy of which is in the Surgeon-General's Library in Washington, General Butler charged that the human hide industry had attained national proportions and that it had even reached the point where the peculiar styles of tanning the human integument had caused as much jealousy between Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts as the formula for the mint julep has caused between Georgia and Kentucky.

The galley in question is a statement by William Muller, tanner of North Cambridge, who effectively denies the charges of General Butler as a political farce. Nevertheless, the matter was taken so seriously that, according to the Massachusetts *House Journal* of July 23, 1883, a Mr. Mellen of Worcester asked leave to introduce a bill to make the tanning of human hide illegal, but on July 27, 1883, permission to introduce it was refused.

A pair of high-heeled lady's shoes made from an executed criminal (inspected by Henry Stephens)<sup>37</sup>, three complete human skins (one dressed like parchment)<sup>38</sup>, and a shirt made of a man's entrails (according to R. W. Hackwood) once graced Hermann Boerhaave's surgical collection in his museum in Leyden. A pair of gloves immortalized part of a soldier named Steptoe who was executed early in the last century at the same gaol where Oscar Wilde later paid his debt to society.<sup>39</sup> In 1887, after the criminal Pranzini had been executed for his notorious murders of *femmes galantes*, two card cases were made of his skin and presented by Inspector Rosignol to Messrs. Taylor and Goron, chief and number one man respectively of the Sûreté. The original piece of skin removed from Pranzini's body was about forty centimeters



square and was tanned by Destresse of Paris. However, the Parisian constabulary never had the opportunity to gape at these police trophies, for the solicitor who handled the case denounced Rossignol and ordered the card cases burned.<sup>40</sup>

But the French had been using human skin for wearing apparel even during the *ancien régime*. According to J. C. Valmont de Bomare, the royal surgeon Pierre Sue, father of Eugène, contributed to the Cabinet du Roi a pair of slippers made of human skin; and in the same museum, says Valmont, was a belt on which the vestige of a human nipple was plainly evident.<sup>41</sup> James Lane Allen's often reprinted essay on "The Blue-Grass Region of Kentucky" reports that Hawthorne conversed with an old man in England who advised him that the Kentuckians flayed Tecumseh where he fell and converted his skin into razor-straps.

Isolated bits of human skin serving no useful purpose are found in many collections. In 1884 G. S. Knapp of Chicago presented the U.S. National Museum with a small piece of leather which he said was taken from the back of the neck of the Indian Chief, "Cut Nose," who participated in the "New Ulm Massacre" (New Ulm, Minnesota) of 1862 and was reported to have slaughtered thirty-two women and children with his own hands. In the museum of the Philosophical Institution at Reading (England) there was once a small portion of the skin of Jeremy Bentham, which allegedly "bore a close resemblance to a yellow and shrivelled piece of parchment."<sup>42</sup> This relic recalls the joint of Galileo's backbone in the museum of Padua which was surreptitiously abstracted by the ghoulish physician entrusted with the transfer of the scientist's remains to Santa Croce in Florence in 1737. According to Mr. Cecil B. Hurry, sub-librarian of Trinity College, Cambridge, there are two small pieces of human skin in the Newton Cabinet of the Trinity College Library, *viz.*, (1) a piece in color said to be from the murderer William Corder (executed in 1828), known to all lovers of high melodrama as the slayer of Marie Marten in the Red Barn, and (2) a cream-colored bit from the murderer Thomas Weems who expired at Cam-

bridge in 1819. It is notorious that the Public Library of that shrine of bibliophiles, Bury St. Edmunds, contains the complete trial proceedings against Corder bound in the rest of his skin, which was tanned by the same surgeon who also prepared his skeleton for the West Suffolk Hospital.<sup>43</sup> I myself once owned a dried Indian head won from a Pan-American pilot in a poker game in Oaxaca a few years back, but the head showed no evidence of any of the recognized processes of tanning and tawing.

A widely gossiped incident about a piece of human skin that was never tanned has been properly told by Mr. H. W. Tribolet of the Extra Binding Department of R. R. Donnelley and Sons in Chicago. Some time ago, probably about 1932, Alfred DeSauty, who was instructing the bookbinders of the Lakeside Press in Chicago, gave a talk on bookbinding before a mixed group of interested people. When he came to anthropodermic bindings, he stated in jest that he would be quite happy to be able to bind a copy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in a Negro's skin. His statement was hardly serious, and he soon forgot it. But shortly thereafter a clumsy looking package came to his office with his name on the address label. Inside was a portion of a Negro skin that had been taken from the body of a person who must have died only a few hours previously, for the skin was quite moist and flexible. The unwelcome gift was promptly dispatched to the boiler room. Many months afterwards it was revealed that a mortician's apprentice was in the audience at the time the original statement was made by DeSauty and, appreciating a good opportunity for his crude joke, sent the portion of the skin in question.

By this time it is not difficult to understand how the fact and fiction of the lore of human leather have become almost hopelessly entangled. As if to add to the confusion, political propagandists have capitalized on the natural human abhorrence for the science to the extent of creating a whole system of folklore. But the use of human skin tales did not attain its full growth as a propagandistic weapon until the French Revolution.<sup>44</sup>

Believe, if you care to, the rumors of Philippe-Egalité's anthropodermic breeches made of one piece (probably of whole cloth).<sup>45</sup> Believe, if you will, the yarn about another lovable character from the same period who is said to have engineered the execution of his thieving maid, secured her body for flaying and tanning and had breeches made from the same. Upon subsequently being reminded of her delinquencies, so goes the tale, this ingenious moralist would slap his thigh and shout, "But here she is, the rogue. Here she is!"<sup>46</sup> The story probably may be traced to some contemporary Scandinavian adventurer in Paris who was dreaming of a lucky sixpence. Believe, if you will, the yarns spun about the famous tannery at Meudon by the Marquise de Créquy (Maurice Cousin), Georges Duval, F. S. Feuillet de Conches, Bibliophile Jacob (Paul Lacroix),<sup>47</sup> and countless others. Or believe the rhetoric of Carlyle in *Dr. Claudius* that the French nobles laughed at Rousseau's theories, but that their skins went to bind the second edition of his *Social Contract*.<sup>48</sup>

The French Revolution did produce books bound in human skin, but one must discount such impossible fictions as that of Feuillet de Conches to the effect that sample copies of *The Rights of Man* bound in leather from Meudon (which also provisioned the revolutionary armies, he alleged) were distributed to guests at a "Bal du Zéphir" held in a graveyard. M. Villenave did possess a copy of *The Rights of Man* bound in this material, and few of us who have made the *grand tour* have failed to visit the Musée Carnavalet and inspect the copy of the French Constitution of 1793. As I remember the latter it was light green in color (no doubt stained), and it looked like the skin of a suckling pig. It belonged successively to Villenave, Granier de Cassagnac (who, as we have seen, made a better thing out of an already good story), the Marquis de Turget, and finally the Carnavalet, which brought in 1889.

The yet unwritten unprejudiced history of the French Revolution will devote several chapters to this propaganda about the Meudon tannery. But far more vicious than the gaily macabre French Revolution and its rumor mongers was the

abolitionist scuttlebutt that Southern slaveowners, as a token of "special affection" to favorite human chattel, would tan the skin of slaves after death and use it to bind the family Bible. In point of fact, the only recorded use of human skin during the War Between the States was by a yankee. Joseph Leidy's own copy of his *Elementary Treatise on Human Anatomy* is preserved in the Library of the College of Physicians in Philadelphia with the following inscription: "The leather with which this book is bound, is human skin, from a soldier who died during the great southern rebellion (*sic!*)."<sup>48</sup> Southern historians about to write an impartial history of the War from the Southern point of view will take appropriate note of this damning bit of evidence.

During the first war between Germany and the rest of the civilized world both sides were guilty of fantastic propaganda about the use of skins of both their own dead and the enemy dead. In World War II we were still loath to believe the most commonplace Nazi atrocities because we simply could not swallow the impossible tale about the source of German fats and oils during the first war. Even neutrals made good use of public guillibility during World War I. According to those Arabs who had less respect for truth than the Prophet had, any "person of color" who fell on a European battlefield was flayed, and from his hide were prepared handsome brief cases destined for the use of diplomats who would draw up the peace treaties and bookbindings for learned tomes on the history of that war, the madness of the Occident.<sup>49</sup> Paul Kersten, famous German binder, who was the most adept of all his colleagues in human leather-work, actually made a brief case of part of a fellow mortal.<sup>50</sup>

Appropos of Paul Kersten, it is interesting to note that this impeccable artist who should have been above the pettiness of political rumors was involved in just such a scandal.<sup>51</sup> In 1913 Kersten placed on exhibition with the well known firm of Reuss and Pollack<sup>52</sup> in Berlin some twelve books<sup>53</sup> which he had bound in human skin. None were priced, but the dealers took it upon themselves to sell one of the volumes, *Die*

*knöcherne Hand*, for RM 75.—without Kersten's permission. Kersten was quite indignant that his art should yield such miserly returns and immediately instituted a suit against Reuss and Pollack. The case dragged through the courts of Berlin, and numerous experts were called upon to testify concerning the value of such a volume. Prussian jurists carefully explained (and this is the true masterpiece of Imperial German propaganda) that Germany was a difficult place to decide such a suit inasmuch as all the experts were in France, citing in particular the Parisian dealer Dorbon, who had asked 600 francs for an anthropodermic binding. Ultimately the case was settled out of court with Reuss and Pollack indemnifying Kersten to the extent of RM 175.—as the difference between the price of the book and the value Kersten imputed to it. But the most fantastic aspect of this incident is the allegation of Kersten that the purchaser was the wife of the American ambassador. The Hon. James W. Gerard advises that Mrs. Gerard never purchased such a book, and he classes the story with the rumor that when Mrs. Gerard was given a Red Cross decoration by the German government, she pinned it to her dog's collar and paraded him on what used to be Unter den Linden. It has not been possible to ascertain whether Mrs. John G. A. Leishman, wife of Mr. Gerard's predecessor, was the purchaser of *Die knöcherne Hand*.

During the last war there were innumerable rumors about the practical uses to which the Nazis put the skins of their victims. The wretches who died at Buchenwald are said to have reappeared frequently on a table in a "gute Stube" adorning a volume of *Mein Kampf*<sup>54</sup>; and such credence did the United Nations justices at Nuremberg place in these reports that pieces of leather alleged to be tanned human skin were admitted as evidence in the processes. It has further been alleged that the skin of tattooed inmates of the concentration camps appealed to Wehrmacht officers' wives as much as it did to the unnamed warden of St. Mary à la Comte. Kenneth L. Dixon, an AP staff writer, reported in a dispatch of May 22, 1945, that Karl Voelkner, SS Obersturmführer at Buchenwald,

gave CIC agents a signed statement confessing that lampshades were made of the skins of his slaves. Somewhat more practical minded SS officers at Dachau are supposed to have skinned Russian prisoners and made gloves, saddles, and house slippers of their hides.<sup>55</sup>

One fears, however, that we are going a bit out of bounds after reflecting upon the innuendo of a statement by William J. Humphreys in the *Herald-Tribune* for Feb. 2, 1945, on Nazi medical experiments with their prisoners: "What happened to the boiled human flesh the witness did not know, but he suspected that some use was made of it. It was collected in tins and carried away."

Getting back to the facts, it is of considerable interest to find out just what human leather looks like. Unfortunately (for those who would like to believe the mythology of Meudon) the formula allegedly used by French tanners of the Revolution has not been preserved. But Valmont de Bomaro has provided us with one formula, according to which the skin is saturated in a strong solution of alum, roman vitriol, and table salt for several days. Subsequently it is dried in the shade and dressed in the usual manner. Paul Kersten, like Dr. Downing, recommends sumac specifically as a medium for tanning human skin.

There is some disagreement as to the actual appearance of human leather. Paul Kersten says that the grain is quite remarkable, being a combination of coarse grained goat and pig skin. The back has the coarser grain whereas the chest and belly have a finer grain. The thickness of Kersten's skins was 2 mm (dorsal) and 1 mm (lateral). He stated that the consistency was considerably greater than in other leathers and that it is difficult to work because of the depth of the grain as in pigskin. Otherwise, Kersten argues, it is like fine morocco, and the amateur would mistake it for such. Americans who would verify Kersten's statements may inspect his handicraft in the binding of a set of papers of L'Admiral, formerly in the collection of Hans Friedenthal and presently in the Lane Medical Library of Stanford University. Dr.

Nathan van Patten, professor of bibliography at Stanford University, has confirmed the rumor that the doublures of this volume are of "graveyard" mole.

A. M. Villon authoritatively states that human skin can be tanned to both harsh-dry and soft-glossy states. He says that its color varies from the palest pink to the deepest brown, and that its thickness varies from a seventieth to a sixth of an inch, the greatest thickness being found over the belly. When tanned, Villon says, it increases in thickness and yields a very tough leather, fine-grained and quite soft. Holbrook Jackson agrees with Villon that human skin increases in thickness and yields a fine-grained, soft leather; and he goes on to quote Cyril Davenport to the effect that it resembles thick calf, although it is difficult to rid it completely of hair. The canard about the resemblance of human leather to calf may probably be traced to the English bibliophile Herbert Slater, and it has been effectively denied in the *Berliner Tageblatt*.<sup>56</sup> Jackson cites another unnamed authority who contends that it is more like sheep with a firm and close texture, soft to the touch, and susceptible of a fine polish. The anatomist of bibliomania examined a specimen tanned by Edwin Zaehnsdorf and concluded that it resembled morocco rather than pigskin. A notable piece in the Boston Athenaeum (*infra*) is said to resemble gray deerskin. Percy Fitzgerald said that the human skin of his acquaintance was "darker and more mottled than vellum."

The effect of tanning on the thickness of human skin is described by a Dr. Legrain of Villejuif, who confessed a quarter of a century ago to the editor of the *Mercure de France* that he had removed a piece of skin from a corpse while a student in medical school and had had it tanned. When it was returned to him six months after he had delivered it to the tanner, it had a "fearful solidity, completely shrivelled up." It was less than half the size of the original skin, but its thickness had increased to a full centimeter. The rigidity was greater than that of any skin he had ever seen before; and in order to put it in suitable condition for binding

a book (Théophile Gautier's *Comédie de la mort*), he had to have it split to more pliable thickness.<sup>57</sup>

Of course, Gustav Bogeng (who owned a duodecimo in human skin by Kersten) could not refrain from adding his categorical finalities to the issue. He advised that the natural grain of human skin could readily be distinguished, even in the absence of vestigial hairs, from pig and goat skin and that it could be tanned so as to produce whatever grain might be desired. Bogeng solemnly warned his loyal disciples in the *Zeitschrift der Bücherfreunde* that any enthusiast who felt compelled to own an anthropodermic binding should protect himself by having a microscopic examination made of the merchandise.

Some of the wilder speculations on human skin have described it as soft and white (*peau de femme* according to the *American Weekly*); and a few authorities have speculated on the relative softness of human leather from various parts of the body, alleging that the softest comes from the thighs. On the other hand, the catalogue of the Le Havre fair's "Anthropological, Anatomical, and Ethnological Museum"<sup>58</sup> says that leather from the thighs is the thickest. Maurice Cousin's Marquise de Créquy alleged that human skin had a greater consistency than chamois but that the softness of the tissue deprived it of solidity. One of the few experts who has observed any resemblance of human skin to that of the higher anthropoids is Dard Hunter, who found that the human skin with which he operated resembled "in texture the skin of a monkey, and to some extent, pig skin." Hunter's story is too good to put on ice for a later paragraph.<sup>59</sup>

Some forty years ago, as a young man, the noted founder of the M.I.T. Paper Museum was learning the graphic arts in Elbert Hubbard's Roycroft Shop in East Aurora, N.Y. One day a widow of tender years presented him with a testimonial volume of letters addressed to her late husband and requested specifically that Hunter bind it in a leather which she herself would provide.

Hunter had been prepared to clothe the letters in his



choicest leather, but the customer supplied him with a piece that resembled neither the crushed levant nor the oasis niger which he reserved for his finer work. The lady did not hesitate to admit that the leather came from the back of the honoree of the letters. When Hunter learned that the lady remarried shortly thereafter, he speculated as to whether the lady's second husband would gaze at the memorial volume on the drawing room table and think of himself as a possible volume two; and, as the binder, Hunter annotated the incident with a heartfelt epilogue, "Let us hope that this was strictly a limited edition." Hunter writes that a half a century has erased from his memory the name of the lady for whom this extraordinary job was performed.

Extensive research fails to reveal that human skin was used for bookish purposes prior to the eighteenth century despite arguments of Gayet de Sansale and Villon. One is constrained to question the latter's undocumented statement that alchemists were "very fond of tanning small pieces of human skin, wherewith to bind their books of secrets, or prayer books." Perhaps the earliest plausible report of an anthropodermic binding comes from the indefatigable traveller and bibliophile Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach.<sup>60</sup> Besides sundry stuffed human skins which he discovered in the course of his travels, he was particularly delighted to find an anthropodermic binding in the library of the Syndic of Maastricht in Bremen: "We also saw a little duodecimo, Molleris manuale praperationis ad mortem. There seemed to be nothing remarkable about it, and you couldn't understand why it was here until you read in the front that it was bound in human leather. This unusual binding, the like of which I had never before seen, seemed especially well adapted to this book, dedicated to more meditation about death. You would take it for pig skin."

The earliest authentic example of an anthropodermic binding which has been identified is located in the library of the University of California at Los Angeles. It is the *Relation des mouvemens de la ville de Messine depuis l'année M. DC.*

LXXI. *jusques à présent* with an inscription running "À la Bibliothèque de M. Bignon. Reliure en peau humaine." A recent hand noted that the Bignon in question was Armand Jerome Bignon, librarian of Louis XV. But here we are plunged into folklore again; for there have been consistent but unconfirmed reports of books which Louis XV had bound in the skin of ex-mistresses, evidently "the skin you love to touch." Pre-revolutionary anthropodermic bindings will be a likely thesis topic for some inspired candidate for an advanced degree in a graduate library school.

Whether the practice of binding books in human skin was given its main impetus by the French Revolution is difficult to ascertain. There are other indications, and possibly more reliable ones than the tales propagated by Royalist historians, which point to the invention and cultivation of anthropodermic binding by the medical profession with the able seconding of their professional brethren practicing before the bar. We can be reasonably sure of the story told by Frognall Dibdin (for all his other weaknesses for the bibliographically sensational) to the effect that the classicist, bibliophile, and scientist Dr. Anthony Askew had a *Treatise of Anatomy* bound in human skin even though the volume itself has disappeared from sight. Bogeng confused the tale of Askew's *Treatise* (incidentally, calling Askew a Russian)<sup>61</sup> with that of a Yorkshire witch variously called Mary Bateman, Patman, Bates, Ratman, Putnam, Batman, and Raiman by the inexact.

Her real name was Mrs. Mary Harker Bateman, and after her execution at York Castle in 1809 she was dissected at the General Infirmary at Leeds, her skin tanned and distributed in small pieces to various applicants. A book bound in this woman's skin was allegedly in the library of the Prince of Wales at the Marlborough House at one time.<sup>62</sup> Another English physician, John Hunter (1728-1794) was supposed to have had a treatise on pathological dermatology bound up in a healthy cured human skin.<sup>63</sup>

The earliest anthropodermic binding prepared by a member of the medical profession and definitely known to exist at

present is counted among the treasured relics of the Royal Infirmary at Bristol. In a cabinet near the skeleton of John Horwood, eighteen-year-old murderer hanged at Bristol New Drop in 1821, is a volume containing all the details of Horwood's crime, trial, execution and dissection. The book is bound in what would appear to be a light Russia, with tooled border lines in gold, a skull and crossbones in each corner, and the following gilt inscription in blackletter: "Cutis Vera Johannis Horwood."

Both the skeleton and the binding were prepared by Dr. Richard Smith, chief surgeon of the Infirmary for nearly half a century.<sup>64</sup> But the medicos of Bristol have no monopoly on the skins of executed criminals. Percy Fitzgerald stated that the Bristol Law Library also owned several volumes in the skins of local culprits which he saw in the shop of a dealer on St. Michael's Hill, Bristol, whence they had been sent for repair.<sup>65</sup>

It is difficult to fix the origins of the custom of flaying criminals and tanning their hides in England in modern times. Soldier Steptoe of Reading may enjoy the distinction of having been the first victim of this practice. A bit of the skin of one Cadwallader, executed at Hereford in 1816 for the murder of his wife in Leominster, was owned by a reader of *Notes and Queries* as late as 1873.<sup>66</sup> Charles Smith, the murderer, hanged at Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1817, underwent the process of post-humous flaying and tanning, and a part of his skin was placed in a book containing the particulars of his trial and execution. But the first authenticated case of a binding in a criminal's skin was Samuel Johnson's dictionary bound in the integument of one James Johnson (degree of relationship to the great lexicographer unknown), publicly hanged on Castle Hill, Norwich, in 1818, before 5,000 spectators. The volume was owned by a Norwich bookseller named Muskett and subsequently passed to the possession of one of his brothers.<sup>67</sup> Mr. George Hayward, city librarian of Norwich, has been unable to locate the present whereabouts of this volume or to identify the Muskett family.

The disposal of the skin of Thomas Weems (executed in 1819) has already been noted. In 1824 one Thurtell was executed for the murder of Weare, and it is believed that a large roll of his skin, or, if not his, that of Arthur Thistlewood, the Cato Street conspirator, was in the possession of a fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, at one time during the last century.<sup>68</sup> It was said to have been admirably tanned and to resemble a very superior buckskin. Cantabs as well as Oxonians have displayed a fondness for anthropodermic binding. Cim alleged that one Queensby, a Greek scholar of Cambridge, ordered that upon his death he be flayed to provide a home for the *Iliad*, but it is not known whether his wishes were fulfilled.<sup>69</sup>

At least a part of William Burke's skin found its way into a library, even though not on the back of a book. After his execution, the publisher of his trial secured a portion of his skin, tanned it, and distributed small pieces to his clients. A portion of it, dyed dark blue, was placed in the extraordinary collection of papers relating to Burke and Hare which was formed for Walter Scott and placed in the library at Abbotsford.<sup>70</sup> In 1830, one year after Burke's execution, rat-catcher George Cudmore atoned with his life in the Devon County Jail for the murder of his spouse.<sup>71</sup> W. Clifford, book-seller of Exeter, somehow got hold of his skin after it had been tanned at the Devon and Exeter Hospital and used it years later to bind Tegg's edition of Milton (1852). This volume passed into the hands of the Exeter collector Ralph Sanders, and today it is in the Albert Memorial Library of that city.

In May, 1871, Lord H. haunted the boulevards and alleys of Paris for three days with a sizeable amount of pounds sterling in his pocket looking for an informant who would secure for him the cadaver of a female agitator who was to be executed by a firing squad. His intention was to flay the carcass and deliver the hide to the binder Trautz-Bauzonnet with instructions to use it to cover the two volumes of the first edition of *Le portier des chartreux*. But the hapless peer failed in his mission and received instead a slug of lead in his lower extremity which confined him to his bed for three months.<sup>72</sup>

It is possible that this story is a slightly distorted version of William Salt Brassington's tale of the agent of the London dealer who had an order for an anthropodermic binding for Holbein's *Dance of Death*. The agent betook himself to Paris during the Commune as the most likely source for his raw material, but he not only failed but also escaped only by the skin of his teeth from sharing the fate of the object of his search.<sup>73</sup>

In point of fact, there is only one example in France since the Revolution of a criminal whose hide was supposed to be tanned for the purpose of binding a book. The famed second story operator Campi, whose true name was never revealed to the public, was dissected after his execution, and his right side and arm were supposed to have been flayed to provide the leather for binding the account of his trial and dissection.

According to the *Chronique médicale's* informants, M. Flan-dinette of the École d'anthropologie was to do the tanning. It has never been positively ascertained whether Campi's hide was actually used to bind his dossier, especially in view of the fact that its present whereabouts is unknown; but at all events it has come to light that a number of card cases were made of his skin and presented to various fonctionnaires of the Parisian constabulary. After the Campi incident, the criminal Pranzini was flayed and his hide tanned to amuse the Surêté (supra). For the benefit of all concerned with American justice, let it be stated here and now that one of the few inside facts I can reveal about the F.B.I. is that the files of all our villains from Machine Gun Kelly to Herbert Hans Haupt are bound in plain flexible cardboard covers duly purchased on official vouchers. But our hands are by no means altogether clean.

This brings us to the most famous of all anthropodermic bindings, a strictly American product resting on the shelves of 10½ Beacon Street, the Boston Athenaeum. In February, 1944, the library letter of this venerable collection flung out a challenge captioned, "Are There Others?"<sup>74</sup> The note dealt with the *Narrative of the Life of James Allen*, with aliases, the best

known of which was George Walton. While waiting for the gallows, Walton, a Jamaican mulatto with an unenviable reputation as a highwayman, gave a signed statement to the warden of the Massachusetts State Prison, and this document was published in 1837 by Harrington and Company of Boston as a slender thirty-page octavo. Shortly after Walton's execution, his tanned hide was delivered to Peter Low, an English binder who had established himself in the Old Corner Book Store. Low matched up the gruesome hide with the lurid contents of the owner's statement, and today this volume, with an inscription reading "Hic Liber Waltonis Cute Compactus Est" rests in the Trustee's Room of the Athenaeum.

Yes, there are others. Indeed, autoanthropodermic binding has its own little cubbyhole in the field of bibliopegy. Back in the days of a happier Berlin of 1913 and 1914 this subject came up in the lively discussions of anthropodermic bindings in the "Kunst and Wissenschaft" column of the *Berliner Tageblatt*; and Bogeng, who could never resist the opportunity to express himself on such occasions, put down a few original speculations on the matter:

Maybe the ambition of bibliophiles feverishly aroused by the newspaper stories, will turn to a problem never yet solved: the library of books bound in the skin of their own authors. But this library will probably always remain a pious wish, unfulfilled because of the caprice of the object and not of the subject.<sup>75</sup>

Essad Bey reflected on the destiny of Walton's mortal remains and stated his personal conviction that even though some might find this practice "repulsive, yes, even immoral," he himself believed that beneath the surface there was a "good spot of piety, of old, coarse romanticism . . ." Those who seek the romantic will probably find no tale of autoanthropodermic bibliopegy quite so fascinating as the story of Percy Fitzgerald in his *Book Fancier* about an unidentified Russian poet who fell from his horse and suffered amputation of a lower extremity which he promptly had flayed and

the skin tanned. The resulting leather was used to bind a volume of his own sonnets, which was in turn presented to his lady love.

One of the most famous of all autoanthropodermic bindings is the one which encases a copy of Delille's French translation of the *Georgics*, in the possession of M. Edmond Leroy, an attorney of Valenciennes toward the early part of this century.<sup>76</sup> Leroy's father, Aimé Leroy, while still a young law student, was able to persuade Tissot, Delille's successor in the chair of Latin poetry at the Collège de France, to permit him to go into the room where the cadaver of "the French Virgil" was lying in state. From the corpse of his master he removed two pieces of skin, one from the chest and another from the leg. We have an account of Leroy's exploit in his own words:

I don't think I was seen by anyone; rich with my little treasure, I left and disappeared at once. Some will perhaps find a little fault with the act I have just confessed. When I got the idea of stealing these fragments, so frail but so precious for me, it overcame me, and I felt myself driven on by my respect for an illustrious dead man . . . and I committed this larceny by way of reverence.<sup>77</sup>

Two particularly interesting examples of autoanthropodermic bindings have not been located in the course of this investigation. The first one is described by Walter Hart Blumenthal<sup>78</sup> as a volume in "an obscure antiquarian shop" near Saint Augustine's Church in Paris, the "most unique (*sic*) book in the whole world." The author of the book was anonymous, but in the center of the front cover was a delicate inlay in the shape of a butterfly which, according to the accompanying explanation, was made of a piece of the author's own skin. The second is a book bound in the skin of Ernst Kauffmann, a young man who was obsessed with the desire of attaining fame in the world of letters but was prevented from attaining this goal by sickness and an early death. In order to win some kind of notoriety, he made a collection of

woodcuts by various celebrated German artists, entitling the whole *Zwei hundert berühmte Männer*, and directed that it be bound in his own skin after his death, a wish which was obediently executed. This volume, together with a copy of *Gil Blas*, two volumes of *A Book about Doctors*, and a three-volume work on entomology were all in the collection of anthropodermic bindings owned by a Dr. Mathew Wood of Philadelphia a half a century ago.<sup>79</sup>

The illusiveness of some of the famous examples of human skin bindings and the case with which the facts concerning them are distorted makes the study a difficult one. For example, another Philadelphia physician, John Stockton-Hough, was one of the leading collectors of anthropodermic bindings in America; but the story of his contributions to the science has been seriously mutilated, even to the extent of giving him the wrong Christian name and dating his activities improperly. In the fall of 1940 the late and much lamented *Dolphin* published an article stating that in 1903 a Dr. F. (*sic*) Stockton-Hough was assembling a collection of human skin bindings and was reported to have more than six.<sup>80</sup> It was further stated that he facilitated the binder's work by procuring and tanning the skin himself. The *Dolphin* advised that his collection passed to "the Library of the Philadelphia Hospital, where it may probably still be seen."

The facts of the case are somewhat different. John Stockton-Hough graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Medical School in 1868, and in 1900 he died in Ewingville, near Trenton. The following year his library was sold to the Philadelphia College of Physicians. Two anthropodermic bindings have been identified in the library of the College of Physicians as having formerly belonged to Stockton-Hough, entered in the catalogue of the library as follows:

[Couper, Robert]

Speculations on the mode and appearances of impregnation in human female; with an examination of the present theories of generation. By a physician.

149 pp. 8°. Edinburgh, Elliott, 1789.



Contains also 2nd edition of same work.  
Volume bound with human skin.

[Drelincurtius, Carolus, 1633–1697]

De conceptione adversaria. Disce, homo, de tenui constructus pulvere, quae te edidit in luncem conditione Deus. Ed. altera.

[8], 74 pp. por. 24°.

Lugd. Batv., Boutesteyn, 1686.

[Bound with human skin.]

[Portrait inserted.]

With those two models at hand, it is hoped that no library cataloguer will ever become impatient with the Anglo-American catalogue rules for failure to give specific instructions on the proper description of anthropodermic bindings.

Both books contain inscriptions by Stockton-Hough stating that they are bound in human skin. If there are as many as four more books which were bound by Stockton-Hough, they cannot be located at present. Dr. W. Brook McDaniel, 2d, librarian of the College of Physicians, states that some of the duplicates from the Stockton-Hough collection were sold to the University of Pennsylvania, while others were sold to various dealers. There is no information available to indicate that the University of Pennsylvania Library has any of these books at present. Incidentally, it is of some interest to note that medical books on both sides of the Atlantic have a special attraction for anthropodermic binders. Paul Kersten advised that the University of Göttingen Library owns a Hippocrates in human skin (pre-Nazi).<sup>81</sup>

The fabulous American book collections have often been poorly described by Europeans operating with secondary sources. Two anthropodermic bindings have been discussed so loosely in Europe that it has been impossible to locate them or identify the owner. Numerous bibliographical dilettantes have referred to a *Tristram Shandy* bound in the skin of a young Chinese woman and a *Sentimental Journey* bound in the skin of a negress which were supposed to have been in the collection of a wealthy merchant of Cincinnati, Mr. William G . . . Albert Cim blandly repeats this tale in *Le livre*,<sup>82</sup>

but neither he nor anyone else can give a primary source for the information. Likewise, extensive investigation by the reference department of Cincinnati's efficient Public Library failed to shed more light on the matter. William G . . . is still a bibliographical ghost, if not also the defunct negress and the Chinese girl.

The most frequently misquoted story of a human skin binding in modern times is also the best known and is missing from no respectable study of anthropodermic bibliopegy. It deals with the famous volume owned by Camille Flammarion, French popularizer of astronomical research. As late as 1925 the book was still in the library of the observatory at Juvisy, and it may still be there if some Nazi who never heard of Buchenwald did not liberate it. But between the *American Weekly* and romantically inclined Gallic bibliophiles, the story has been mutilated so that some versions are almost unrecognizable. However, a careful study of the different texts will yield a reasonably accurate narrative.

One tale, and this seems to be the one that has fastened itself on the Gallic mind, has it that a twenty-eight year old countess of foreign (*i.e.*, not French) birth prevailed upon her husband to invite Flammarion to her chateau in the Jura.<sup>83</sup> The young woman was dying of tuberculosis, and she told Flammarion that after her death she was going to have him sent a present which he would be compelled to accept. An anonymous writer in the *Chronique médicale* argues that Flammarion later admitted that on the night of the farewell he had expressed intense admiration for the dazzling white shoulders of the countess. It was not beyond a popularizer like Flammarion to encourage at least a minimum of publicity, and certainly an admission on his part of such a titillating detail improves the story. Nevertheless, the *Chronique médicale* is not altogether trustworthy, for it states that the physician who cut away the skin was a Dr. V . . . , whereas other versions attribute the operation to a Dr. Ravaud. On her deathbed the countess is alleged to have told Ravaud that she had secretly loved Flammarion for a long time even

though she had never met him. In order for him to remember her, she said, she wanted to have him bind one of his books in her skin. Ravaud identified the countess as a "member of one of the first families of France."

In spite of the fact that Flammarion was alleged to have known the woman and to have admired her shoulders, one is inclined to believe that she was a stranger to him inasmuch as there is an inscription on the volume itself (the Didier octavo edition of Flammarion's *Terres du ciel*) reading "Exécution pieuse d'un voeu anonyme. Reliure en peau humaine (femme) 1882."<sup>84</sup> According to the first story, Flammarion had no way of knowing that the woman desired to have one of his books bound in her skin inasmuch as she did not specify the nature of her proposed posthumous gift. It was also reported in 1927 by the Belgian bibliographer Albert Boukaert that Mrs. Flammarion said that her husband never knew the name of the donor of the leather for binding *Terres du ciel* and that at first he had believed that some medical students were playing a crude trick on him. However, there was a note from Ravaud in the package stating that he (Ravaud) had fulfilled his part of the promise to the dead woman and that he now expected Flammarion to do his part. Mrs. Flammarion still had the note in 1927.<sup>85</sup>

Flammarion reported to Dr. Cabranès, once editor of the *Chronique médicale*, that the binding was executed by Engel. He took the skin, still moist when he received it, to a tanner in the Rue de la Reine-Blanche, and three months were consumed in its preparation. The picture of the binding printed by Blumenthal gives a fairly good idea of this famous piece, but it would be of considerable interest to examine the whole binding in detail to determine whether or not it is hand tooled *au fer froid, style monastique*.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, as the case may be, no other anthropodermic binding has an equally romantic history back of it, although it would surely be interesting to know the full story about the volume in the John G. White Collection at the Cleveland Public Library. It is a Koran purchased from W.

Heffer, the well-known Cambridge dealer in oriental and European books. Heffer advertized that the skin belonged originally to the West Arab leader Bushiri ibn Salim who revolted against his German partners, and he said that the story had been authenticated by a Professor Wilson of Cambridge.

The Newberry Library, like the Cleveland Public, also possesses an anthropodermic binding of oriental provenance. It came to the Newberry Library in 1919 as part of the bequest of Mr. John M. Wing. A note on the front fly leaf reads: "Found in the Palace of the King of Delhi Sept. 21st, 1857, eleven days after the assault. James Wise MD. Bound in human skin." Examination of the pore structure of the leather by a Chicago dermatologist has confirmed the character of the binding. The late Ernest F. Detterer, custodian of the Wing Foundation, states that the binding proper is smooth and thin, almost like parchment, and that it has been dyed a maroon color. The covers have gold stamped corner and center pieces of oriental floral design (accordingly, certainly not of Moslem origin). A letter to Dr. Wise attached to one of the back fly leaves identifies the text of the manuscript as "a narrative of events connected with the Dekkan comprising biographies, deeds, genealogies, etc. of sundry notables by a Nawab Wuzeer of Hyderabad." It was copied by Mir Baki 'Alai, who completed it in the year of the Hegira 1226, that is, 1848, A.D.

In general, American libraries are exceptionally well stocked with anthropodermic bindings, and many of these items are traceable to some of our best known collectors. For example, the Watkinson Library in Hartford, Conn., has an anthropodermic binding from the collection of the late Samuel Putnam Avery. Part of a collection of fine and unusual bindings bequeathed by Mr. Avery to his nieces, the Misses Welcher of West Hartford, it is now on indefinite loan to the Watkinson Library. Rather appropriately, the full title reads *Le traicté de peyne. Poëm allégorique dédié à Monseigneur et à Madame de Lorryanne. Manuscrit inédit du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*

(Paris: Roquette, 1867). Ruth Q. Kerr, librarian of the Watkinson Library, has advised that the binding is light tan in color with gold and dark brown decoration. Evidently it was acquired by Mr. Putnam subsequently to his exhibition at Columbia University in 1903, since it did not find a place in that show, which included several other curious bindings.<sup>86</sup>

Mr. William Easton Louttit, Jr., of Providence, R.I., has three volumes bound in human skin. His copy of Vesalius' *De humani corporis fabrica* (Venice, 1568), is decorated with gold and blind tooling; and the leather label, "humana cute vestitus liber," appeals to the medical historian's sense of the appropriate. Mr. Louttit's copy of the English translation of Adolph Bel's *Mademoiselle Giraud My Wife* (Chicago; Laird and Lee, 1891) is bound in three-quarters leather resembling a dark pigskin; and on the fly leaf is a note reading "Bound in human skin" from the pen of Mr. S. B. Luyster, formerly head of Brentano's rare book department. The book itself was purchased by Mr. Louttit from the Bodley Book Shop in 1936. Most interesting is his copy of *The Dance of Death* (London: George Bell, 1898) by Hans Holbein, with an introductory note by Austin Dobson. The binding is described as "Double gold border, black  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch inlay with cross-bones in the corners, black inlay dots and gold arrows, a black inlay circle about one inch in diameter in the center with a gold and black skull inside and crossed gold arrows around . . . Back-strip has black label 'Holbein's Dance of Death' and 1898 in gold with alternate skulls and cross-bones between raised hands." The leather is described as "very light in colors."

Anatomist Holbrook Jackson advises that in 1891 an unidentified physician instructed Edwin Zaehnsdorf to bind a copy of Holbein's *Dance of Death* in the skin of a woman tanned by Sweeting of Shaftsbury Avenue.<sup>87</sup> Even though Mr. Louttit's book was not published until 1898, anyone who has tried to unravel the folklore of anthropodermic bindings will recognize the possibility that Jackson's date may be wrong and that Mr. Louttit's volume may actually be the one that was bound by Zaehnsdorf. A phantom copy of the *Dance of*

*Death* allegedly bound in human skin is said to have been in the Susan Minns Collection sold at auction by the American Art Association in 1922. Mr. Byrne Hackett of the Brick Row Shop believes that he purchased this copy for the late Ganson Goodyear Depew, but it has not been possible thus far to determine precisely what happened to all the books in the Depew library.

A double dose of the bibliographically curious was a miniature volume bound in a strip of leather taken from the back of an enthusiastic collector.<sup>88</sup> This unusual item was in the library of the late James D. Henderson of Boston a decade and a half ago, but it cannot be located since Mr. Henderson's collection has been sold. It is quite probable that it is identical with a book described by Walter Hart Blumenthal as a "tiny putty-gray volume entitled *Little Poems for Little Folks*, published at Philadelphia in 1847, and bound in human skin taken from the arm of a bibliophile . . ." inasmuch as Mrs. Henderson writes that she remembers this as the title of the volume in her husband's library.

A specialist in unusual bindings of all sorts is Captain Maurice Hamonneau, late of the French Foreign Legion and presently of the bookshop of the American Museum of Natural History.<sup>89</sup> One of his most treasured possessions is his copy of Dr. Thomas Bateman's *Cutaneous Diseases* (1818), which is bound in "full morocco", that is, in the skin of a Moroccan negro! For the purposes of record, it might be noted that he bound a copy of *Mein Kampf* in skunk fur,<sup>90</sup> a copy of Champion's *With the Camera in Tigerland* in Bengal tiger fur, and *All Quiet on the Western Front* in cloth from a German uniform.

He bound Mrs. Martin Johnson's works in the skin of an elephant shot by herself and an author's copy of Janet Flanner's *An American in Paris* in delicately etched black kangaroo and calf leather with doublures of silk on which symbolic French figures were painted. Other leathers with which he has operated include the integuments of lions, tigers, zebras (with hair), and Komodo dragons.

The greatest of all American collections, the Library of

Congress, has its example of anthropodermic binding, although the British Museum and the Preussische Staatsbibliothek cannot say the same for themselves. (The staid Bibliothèque Nationale never mentions its example officially, although there are most reliable rumors to the effect that it owns one, *infra*). The Library of Congress' sample is Pablo de Santa Maria's *Scrutinium scriptuarum*.<sup>91</sup> Blumenthal remarks that "The author was a Jew converted to Christianity, and this tract, anti-Semetic in nature, is hidebound in a double sense." The only authority for stating that the volume is bound in human skin is the word of Otto Vollbehr. However, it might be well for Government anatomists to check the binding for vestigial remnants of human hair and correlate their findings with Dr. Vollbehr's dossier. If the leather of the *Scrutinium scriptuarum* at the Library of Congress is actually of human origin, it is in a form that is a convincing imitation of pig skin.

French collectors and men of letters have been quite partial to anthropodermic bindings. The twenty sou edition of Renan's *Life of Jesus* was bound at Nantes about 1906 in human skin and was known to have been in the possession of an unidentified Parisian collector some fifteen years ago, but its present whereabouts is unknown.<sup>92</sup> The skin was allegedly taken from the armpit of an anonymous woman who had died in the Hôtel-Dieu of Nantes shortly before the binding was executed.

Eugène Sue was only living up to a family tradition if he actually had a small quarto of *Les mystères de Paris* published in 1854 bound in the skin of a girl who had loved him. The *Chronique médicale* and Blumenthal have stated that it was in two volumes bound as one and contained a French inscription, which reads in translation: "This binding is from the skin of a woman, and it was made by M. Alberic Boutaille, 1874."<sup>93</sup> De Crauzat reported that a two-volume set of *Les Mystères de Paris* "en pleine peau d'homme" was offered for sale in 1898 for 200 francs by the Libraire Chacornac at the Quai Saint-Michel.

Sue and Delille are not the only figures from French litera-

ture whose names are associated with anthropodermic binding. In the *Catalogue de la bibliothèque de M. L. Veydt* issued in Brussels in 1879 we find the following entry:

Opuscules philosophiques et littéraires, par MM. Suard et Bourlet de Vauxcelles (Paris, Thevet, in-80). *Exemplaire relié en peau humaine*, comme l'affirme une note collée contre la gerbe. Cette note porte les mentions de la provenance, du prix de la reliure et du nom du relieur. Vingt francs, Deromme, 1796. Provenant de la bibliothèque de M. de Musset. Acheté le 15 de sept. 1832.<sup>94</sup>

The *Chronique médicale's* expert logically speculates that the M. Musset is most probably M. de Musset-Pathay, father of the poet, and not the poet himself as some authorities have improperly assumed. Likewise, it is most probable that co-author Suard is "Thonnête et paisible académicien de ce nom."

Bookish men in France are so thoroughly fascinated by the notion of anthropodermic bindings that the Gallic mind has even resorted to pictorial literary symbolism combined with the biblioepic variety. One lover of unusual bindings, a Dr. Cornil of the Academy of Medicine, senator from L'Allier, and professor of pathological anatomy in the Faculty of Medicine in Paris, managed to find a tattooed skin portraying two knights from the period of Louis XIII in single combat, and he could think of nothing more appropriate than to order his copy of the *Three Musketeers* bound in this hide.

He had another tattooed bit of human integument showing a heart pierced by an arrow, and this was used for binding his copy of *Bubu de Montparnasse*. His binder was René Kieffer, who protected the worthy doctor by calling him Dr. V . . . in his communications to the *Mercure de France* on the matter.<sup>95</sup> Physicians are not the only professional men who must maintain professional secrecy.

According to De Crauzat, Kieffer was the dean of anthropodermic biblioepigists in Paris, and this in a comprehensive sense. For R. Messimy he bound a copy of *Fête foraines* with an inlaid piece of human skin tattooed with the likeness of a



wrestler,<sup>96</sup> a copy of *Les trois dames de Kasbah* with inlaid plates of human skin on both covers showing two ladies in states of dress reminiscent of "Sacred and Profane Love,"<sup>97</sup> and copies of *La vie de caserne* and *Le neveu de Rameau* with inlaid tattooed skins portraying musketeers in shako. Messimy was an indefatigable collector of tattooed anthropodermic bindings. Not satisfied with the superb work of Kieffer, he had De Sambleaux-Weckessen bind a *Sahara et Sahel* with an inlaid tattoo of an equestrian knight in armor.<sup>98</sup> Even Firmin-Didot succumbed to this Gallic passion for tattoos when he bound for Edmond Halphen a *Dance of Death* in the skin of a sailor with tattoos portraying exotic love themes side by side with reverent portraits of his superior officers. De Crauzat says that Halphen patriotically presented this volume to the Bibliothèque Nationale, but that institution has made no such fuss over it as it has over the alleged manuscripts on human parchment.<sup>99</sup>

Rivalling the legacy of Camille Flammarion's unidentified admirer was the inheritance of Auguste Reverdin, a surgeon of Geneva in the last century. Reverdin received from the estate of an unidentified friend a sum of money as well as the skin of the legator, acceptance of the latter being a condition of receipt of the former. He cut a small piece of skin from the cadaver's breast and had it tanned at Annecy at an exorbitant price. Having fulfilled the prerequisite of his benefactor for receiving the money, he promptly got rid of the hide by passing it on to Marcellin Pellin, historian of the French Revolution, who used it for binding his copy of the *Almanach des prisons* (1793).<sup>100</sup>

A quick perusal of the columns of the *Intermédiaire* will reveal other anthropodermic volumes in France. In the 1880s a 32<sup>nd</sup> edition of Horace's *Odes* published by Charpentier was bound in a human hide prepared by M. Portal, archivist of Le Tarn, who still had the book in his possession as late as 1906.<sup>101</sup> J. G. Bord reported that in 1910 a bookstore in the Rue de Seine was offering Lortic's anthropodermic binding of the Marquis de Sade's *Philosophie dans le boudoir*. The

dealer alleged that it was in *peau de femme* and that he could identify the *original* owner by name.<sup>102</sup> In the same year the 12<sup>mo</sup> edition of Legouvé's *Mérite de femmes* was seen on the quais accompanied by a certification from a physician that it was human skin.<sup>103</sup> In an article beginning "Poe et peau . . ." an unidentified contributor to the *Intermédiaire*<sup>104</sup> advised that J. R. Brousse, the poet of the *Maison sur la colline*, had Poes' *Poems* (translated by Mallarmé and illustrated by Manet and Rops) in the skin of Bamboula, a famous negro wrestler of yesteryear.

Paul Combes advised that Dr. Ludovic Bouland, once president of the Société des collectionneurs d'ex-libris et de reliures artistiques, had a gynaecological treatise in the skin of a woman who had expired in the hospital at Metz or Nancy.<sup>105</sup> The Municipal Library at Maçon owns L'Abbé Nollet's *Essai sur l'électricité des corps* (1746, in-12) in human skin.<sup>106</sup> Just before the last war the Chéramy sale in Paris offered an octavo edition of Émile Deschancel's *Le bien qu'on a dit des femmes* bound in *peau de femme* (with sworn certification in writing to this effect by three reputable Parisians) and equipped with silken doublures. Offered at the same sale was an 1885 edition of *Poésies d'Anacréon* allegedly bound in the skin of a negress.<sup>107</sup> Soon after the first World War a shop in the Rue Lafayette offered an anthropodermic binding for sale and displayed other articles supposed to have been fabricated from the same skin.<sup>108</sup>

Ever since the first World War the production of anthropodermic bindings has slackened considerably. To the credit of twentieth-century civilization and to the discredit of nineteenth-century romanticism and decadence, the art of binding books in human skin is dying. Whether or not its revival by the Nazis will find imitators under other political regimes is a problem that reaches beyond the speculative powers of a mere bibliophile.

## Notes . . .

1. Harry Thurston Peck, ed., *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities* (New York: American Book Company, 1896), pp. 1009–1010.

2. i, 210.

3. iv, 64.

4. See also Albert Way, "Some Notes on the Tradition of Flaying Inflicted in Punishment of Sacrilege, the Skin of the Offender Being Affixed to the Church-Doors," *Archaeological Journal*, V (1848), 189–190.

5. J. Ardagh, "Books Bound in Human Skin," *Notes and Queries*, CLIX (Oct. 25, 1930), 303.

6. Walter George Bell, *More About Unknown London* (London: John Lane, 1921), p. 167.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 170. Quekett conducted several other investigations for Way.

8. Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli, "Haut," col. 1583, in his *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1927– ), III, 1583–1585.

9. Giovanni Battista Basile, *Il Pentamerone*, i, 10.

10. See also Max Höfler, *Volksmedizin und Aberglaube in Oberbayerns Gegenwart und Vergangenheit* (Munich: E. Stahl, 1888), p. 172.

11. Bächtold-Stäubli, *op. cit.*, cols. 1584–1585.

12. *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: G. Crès, 1928– ), XII, 132–133.

13. Bächtold-Stäubli, *op. cit.*, col. 1585. The yet unprinted article on "Werwolfsgürtel" in the unfinished *Handwörterbuch* is probably being held as classified information at headquarters in Frankfurt a.M.

14. Paul Kersten, "Bucheinbände in Menschenhaut," *Zeitschrift für Bücherfreunde*, new series, II (pt. 2, 1910/11), 263. A slightly garbled version is repeated by Walter Hart Blumenthal, "Books Bound in Human Skin," *The American Book Collector*, II (1932), 119.

15. B. G., "Manuscripts sur peau humaine, *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, II (Nov. 25, 1865), 681. Eduard Stucken, *The Great White Gods* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1934), p. 71, speaks of an Aztec girl who was flayed alive by the priests

of her religion. Immediately after this hideous ritual a youth disported himself in the streets clad in her skin. See also p. 563.

16. Alfred Louis Auguste Franklin, *Les anciens bibliothèques de Paris; églises, monastères, collèges, etc.* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1867-1870; three volumes), I, 297, and Albert Cim[ochowski], *Le livre; historique-fabrication-achat-classement-usage- et entretien* (Paris: E. Flammarion, 1905-1908; five volumes), III, 296-297. Cim is the best available general account of anthropodermic bibliopeggy. But in spite of his prodigious store of information on the subject, Cim was gullible enough to repeat the impossible tale told him by the binder Georges Mercier (fils) that it was an old tradition to preserve tanned skin of a dead relative for binding a favorite book. See his "Peau humaine tannée," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXII (Aug. 20, 1910), 269-271.

17. "Manuscrits sur peau humaine," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, III (Jan. 10, 1866), 19.

18. *The Life of the Icelander Jón Olafsson, Traveller to India, Written by Himself and Completed about 1661 A.D., with a Continuation by Another Hand, up to His Death in 1679* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1923-1932; two volumes; translated from the Icelandic edition of Sigfús Blondal by Bertha S. Philpotts), II, 160-161.

19. *A Practical Treatise on the Leather Industry* (London: Scott, Greenwood, 1901; translated by Frank T. Addyman), p. 1.

20. Paul Kersten, "Bucheinbände in Menschenleder," *Die Heftlade*, I (1922-1924), 54.

21. "Les reliures en peau humaine." *Chronique médicale*, V (1898), 137. Possibly identical with the skin in M. B. Gautier's Musée anthropologique reported by Ulric (Desaix?), "Les tanneries de peau humaine," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, X (Nov. 10, 1877), 652.

22. H. C., "Human Skin Tanned," *Notes and Queries*, third series, IX (Jan. 27, 1866), 89.

23. J. C. L. (of Malta), "Human Skin Tanned," *Notes and Queries*, third series, IX (Apr. 14, 1866), 309.

24. L., "Human Skin Tanned," *Notes and Queries*, third series, IX (Apr. 28, 1866), 359.

25. Holbrook Jackson, *The Anatomy of Bibliomania* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 511, or II, 91, in the two-volume edition.

26. F. A. Carrington, "Human Skin Tanned," *Notes and Queries*, second series, II (Oct. 11, 1856), 299.

27. "Peau humaine tannée" *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXII (Aug. 30, 1910), 319.

28. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, edited by Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1927), p. 30.

29. The 1690 edition is owned by the University of Chicago Libraries.

30. *History of Friedrich II of Prussia called Frederick the Great* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1897; eight volumes), III, 65 (book ix, chapter 4).

31. *Tetoniana: anecdotes historiques et religieuses sur les seins et l'allaitement, comprenant l'histoire du décolletage et du corset* (Paris: A. Maloino, 1898), p. 56.

32. "Les tanneries de peau humaine," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, V (Nov. 10, 1869), 640-641. The *Intermédiaire* has numerous references to the Ziska legend which may be traced in the collective indices under the headings "Tanneries de peau humaine," "Reliure on peau humaine," and "Peau humaine tannée."

33. Ernest de Crauzat, *La reliure française de 1900 à 1925* (Paris: René Kieffer, n.d.; two volumes), I, 137; Essad Bey, "Der Einband aus Menschenhaut," *Die literarische Welt*, IV (no. 31, Aug. 3, 1928), 4; and V. Dufour, "Les tanneries de peau humaine," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, VII (Apr. 10, 1874), 179.

34. *Journal des Goncourt* (Paris: Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1851-1884; six volumes [later volumes published by E. Flammarion]), II, 28.

35. G., "Human Skin Tanned," *Notes and Queries*, third series, VIII (Dec. 2, 1865), 463.

36. R. W. Hackwood, "Human Skin Tanned," *Notes and Queries*, third series, X (Oct. 27, 1866).

37. "Human Skin Tanned," *Notes and Queries*, second series, II (Sept. 27, 1856), 252.

38. Dr. Eugene H. Wilson, director of the University of Colorado Libraries, has ferreted out another possible example of human skin dressed like parchment, cited as Item 351 in List 24 of Paul F. Veith, 4117 Dryades Street, New Orleans 15: Gutiérrez (Ioanne), *Practicarum quaestionum circa leges regias hispaniae primae partis nouae collectionis regiae liber I. et II . . . cum duplici indice, altero legum regni, altero materiarum*. Quarto (Vellum?) (84), 794, (1) pp. Madrid, 1606. \$42.50. A manuscript note at end claimed that the binding is the skin of one John Wright. However, the custodians of the Harvard University Law Library, which purchased this volume, have been unable thus

far to identify John Wright or to substantiate this allegation in any other way.

39. L. W., "Human Skin Tanned," *Notes and Queries*, third series, IX (May 19, 1866), 422.

40. Eugène Grécourt, "Tanneries de peau humaine," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, L (Oct. 10, 1904), 540-542.

41. *Dictionnaire raisonné universelle d'histoire naturelle* (Lyon: Bruyset frères, 1791; fifteen volumes; fourth revised edition), X, 204 (article on "peau").

42. J. Doran, "Human Leather," *Notes and Queries*, second series, II (Aug. 9, 1856), 119.

43. Egar, "Tanning the Skin of Criminals," *Notes and Queries*, fourth series, XI (Apr. 5, 1873), 292.

44. The literature of tanned human skin and the French Revolution is enormous. In this brief review it is possible only to refer the patient reader to the collective indices of the *Intermédiaire* and such works as Maurice Cousin, *Souvenirs de la Marquise de Créquy de 1710 à 1803* (Paris: Garnier frères, 1855; ten volumes in five; new edition), VIII, 171; Georges Louis Jacques Duval (pseudonym of Georges Labiche), *Souvenirs de la Terreur, 1788-93; précédés d'une introduction historique par C. Nodier* (Paris: Werdet, 1841-1842; eight volumes), IV, 354-355; F. S. Fouillet de Conches, *Causeries d'un curieux* (Paris: H. Plon, 1862-1868; four volumes), II, 171-172; and Joseph-François-Nicolas Dusaulchoy, *Mosaïque historique, littéraire et politique* (Paris: Rosa, 1818; two volumes), I, 240.

45. Paul Kersten, "Bucheinbände in Menschenhaut," *loc. cit.*, p. 264, and Joc'h d'Indret, "Religatum de pelle humana," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, XIV (Dec. 10, 1881), 745-747. According to Dr. By, "Religatum de pelle humana," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, XIII (Nov. 10, 1880), 642, Citizen Philippe owned many books with the inscription "Religatum de pelle humana."

46. A. Adcock, *The Footwear Organizer*, June, 1928, p. 86 (soon only in photostat from the British Museum copy).

47. This incorrigible bibliographical gossip solemnly related that he had seen a poster advertising the Meudon tannery and that he had known one Souterre, who had once worn anthropodermic pants of a single piece of leather. See his "Les tanneries de peau humaine," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, VI (Dec. 25, 1873), 460-462.

48. See "Human Bindings," *Book-Lore*, I (1884-1885), 125.

49. Essad-Bey, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

50. See his "Bucheinbände in Menschenleder." *loc. cit.*, p. 54.

51. H. N., "Ein interessanter Prozess wegen eines in Menschenhaut gebundenen Buches," *Zeitschrift für Bücherfreunde*, new series, IV (pt. 2, 1912/13), 473-474.

52. The Italian dealer Luigi Arrigoni also exhibited an anthropodermic binding in Brera in 1879, according to G. A. E. Bogeng, "Kuriosa," *Archiv für Buchbinderei*, IX (1909), 90.

53. According to Kersten's "Bucheinbände in Menschenleder," *loc. cit.*, p. 54, he bound only six books in human skin, four of which went to dealers (Paul Graupe of Berlin, Agnes Straub of Berlin, Reuss and Pollack, and an unidentified dealer in Toplitz), one to Bogeng, and one (DuPrel's *Das Rätsel des Menschen*) to Kersten himself.

54. See also report of investigations by the pathologist Sir Bernard Spilsbury, who accompanied the eight MPs and the two peers at Buchenwald, in *The Daily Mail*, Apr. 28, 1945.

55. UP dispatch by M. S. Handler in *The Washington Times-Herald*, Nov. 17, 1945.

56. No. 159, Mar. 30, 1913.

57. "La peau humaine," *Mercure de France*, CXLII (Sept. 15, 1920), 832.

58. Lyon; Imprimerie veuve Chanoine, 1873; not located in any American library; cited in "Les reliures en peau humaine," *Chronique médicale*, *loc. cit.*, p. 137, note. 1.

59. Told in his "Peregrinations and Prospects," *Colophon*, 1931, pt. 7, p. [4].

60. *Merkwürdige Reisen durch Niedersachsen, Holland und Engelland* (Ulm and Menningen: J. F. Gaum, 1753-1754; three volumes), II, 192.

61. *Op. cit.*, p. 90.

62. J. Charles Cox, "Tanning the Skin of Criminals," *Notes and Queries*, fourth series, XI (Feb. 15, 1873), 139; Walter Salt Brasington, *A History of the Art of Bookbinding, with Some Account of the Books of the Ancients* (New York; Macmillan, 1894), p. 252. Accounts of the trial are in G. Thompson, *New Newgate Calendar* (London; Walker and Company, 1840), pp. 109-172, and George Borrow, ed., *Celebrated Trials and Remarkable Cases of Criminal Jurisprudence* (London: Knight and Lacey, 1825; six volumes), VI, 44.

63. "Einbaende aus Menschenhaut," *Allgemeiner Anzeiger für Buchbindereien*, XLI (Oct. 18, 1929), 1010, and "Reliures en peau humaine," *La Bibliofilia*, IV (1902/03), 333.

64. There is an extensive account by F. S., "Human Leather Tanned," *Notes and Queries*, second series, II (Sept. 27, 1856), 250-251.

65. *The Book Fancier, or the Romance of Book Collecting*, (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1886), p. 123.
66. J. P., "Tanning the Skin of Criminals," *Notes and Queries*, fourth series, XI (Apr. 5, 1873), 292.
67. G. A. C., "Human Skin Tanned." *Notes and Queries*, third series, IX (May 19, 1866).
68. G. M. T., "Tanning the Skin of Criminals," *Notes and Queries*, fourth series, XI (Apr. 5, 1873), 292.
69. "Peau humaine tannée," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXII (Dec. 20, 1910), p. 941.
70. T. G. S., "Human Skin Tanned," *Notes and Queries*, second series, II (Sept. 27, 1856), 252.
71. Alfred Wallis, "Book Bound in Human Skin," *Notes and Queries*, seventh series, VII (Mar. 30, 1899), 246.
72. "Les reliures en peau humaine," *Chronique médicale*, *loc. cit.*, p. 135.
73. Brassington, *loc. cit.*
74. *Athenaeum Items: a Library Letter from the Boston Athenaeum*, no. 30 (Feb., 1944), p. 2 (reprinted, with additions in *More Books, the Bulletin of the Boston Public Library*, XIX [May, 1944], 203-204, and in *Notes and Queries*, CLXXVII [Oct. 7, 1944], 166); the follow-up article, "Collector's Item," no. 31 (May, 1944), p. 2; and "Human Binding" (in the column "One for the Book"), *Bookbinding and Book Production*, XL (Sept., 1944), 31, are the most reliable of innumerable accounts of this fabulous item.
75. Bogeng in *Zeitschrift für Bücherfreunde*, new series, V (pt. 1, 1913/14), 79-80 (Beiblatt).
76. Nitran, "Reliures singulières," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, XVI (Dec. 10, 1883), 718.
77. Quoted by Cim, *Le Livre*, III, 300.
78. *Op. cit.*, p. 120.
79. Cim, *Le livre*, III, 295-296, 300.
80. "Curl Up On a Good Book," *Dolphin*, no. 4, fall, 1940, pt. 1, p. 92; "Legatura in pelle umana," *La Bibliofilia*, XIV (1912/13), 116; and Gustave Fustier, "Reliures en peau humaine," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXV (May 10, 1912), 629. Mr. Elliott H. Morse, reference librarian of the University of Pennsylvania Library, lent material assistance in securing the true facts concerning the career and anthropodermic experiments of Stockton-Hough.
81. "Bucheinbände in Menschenhaut," *loc. cit.*, p. 264.
82. Another fairly detailed version is in "Reliures en peau humaine," *La Bibliofilia*, *loc. cit.*, p. 333.



83. We need pay little attention to the statement of the *American Weekly* of Sept. 4, 1932, that she was the Countess of Saint Anges, whoever that was, printing her picture to prove it.

84. From the photograph of the binding printed by Blumenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 122, where an extensive and fairly accurate account of the episode may be found.

85. E. Leclerc, "Reliures en peau humaine," *Papyrus*, VIII (1927), 742.

86. *Catalogue raisonnée* (New York: Privately printed, [1903?]).

87. *Op. cit.*, p. 513, and Blumenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 122. Villon, *op. cit.*, reports that Zaehnsdorf also bound two Elzevirs in human skin.

88. James D. Henderson ("scrivener of the news-letter of the LXIV mos."), *Miniature Books* (Leipzig: Tondeur und Säuberlich, 1930), p. 29.

89. A partial bibliography of the numerous articles on Captain Hamonneau's bibliopegistic exploits includes the following: "Bizarre Bookbinder Uses Snake Skin, Skunk Skin, Human Skin," *Life*, XIX (Oct. 22, 1945), p. 148; "Bookbinder Uses Strange Materials," *Popular Science*, CXXXVI (May, 1940), 136; Donald Richmond Barton, "The Book and the Beast," *Natural History*, XLIV (Sept., 1939), 119-122; "No. 1 Cover Man," *Red Book*, LXXXIV (Nov., 1944), 35; Florence von Wien, "Bookbinder; a 60-Second Close-Up," *This Week* (included as Sunday magazine section of many newspapers, e.g., *New York Herald-Tribune*, July 22, 1945), p. 2; and my note in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, XXXVII (June 2, 1945), 19.

90. Jacob Blanck observed in his column on "News from the Rare Book Sellers," *Publisher's Weekly*, CXLVII (June 9, 1945), 2313-2314, that the best possible copy of Adolf Hitler's masterpiece would be in an autoanthropodermic binding. The New York binder Whitman Bennett also managed to disgrace a helpless polecat by using it to adorn Der Fuehrer's opus.

91. Strassburg: J. Mentelin, not after 1470; Stillwell p. 172.

92. C. P., "Pour 'la peau'," *Mercure de France*, CXXXIII (June 1, 1919), 575.

93. Ernst Collin, "Bucheinbände in Menschenleder," *Die Kunstauktion*, III (Sept. 22, 1929), 16, reports a sale in which this volume changed hands in 1878.

94. *Catalogue de la bibliothèque de M. L. Veydt* (Brussels: Oliver, 1879), no. 2414.

95. De Crauzat, *op. cit.*, I, 141-142.

96. Illustration facing p. 148, *ibid.*

97. Illustration facing p. 144, *ibid.*

98. Illustration facing p. 140, *ibid.*
99. *Ibid.*, p. 137. F. Bargallo, "Reliures en peau humaine," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXVI (Oct. 30, 1912), 568-569, reports a respectable American matron in Paris who paid large sums for tattoos from the skins of living persons with inscriptions running along the line of "Adèle est leur bien aimée." Dr. By, *op. cit.*, admitted ownership of a bit of skin from the arm of a girl learning the legend "J'aime pour la vie Léon Camuzat."
100. "Reliures en peau humaine," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXVI (July 30, 1912), 125-126.
101. A., "Reliures en peau humaine," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LIII (Feb. 20, 1906), 269-270.
102. "Peau humaine tannée," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXII (July 20, 1910), 96-97.
103. Nisiar, "Peau humaine tannée," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXII (Aug. 30, 1910), 319-320, and De Crauzat, *op. cit.*, I, 147-148.
104. "Peau humaine tannée," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXII (Oct. 20, 1910), 602.
105. "Peau humaine tannée," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXII (Oct. 30, 1910), 661-662.
106. "Peau humaine tannée," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXII, (Nov. 20, 1910), 771.
107. "Reliures en peau humaine," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXVII (June 30, 1913), 859, and De Crauzat, *op. cit.*, I, 148.
108. "Reliures en peau humaine," *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXXXI (Jan. 30, 1920), 81.