Among the stories in the section on books of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is one about the acquisition and sale (to libraries) of rare translations of Edgar Allan Poe, including *Nouvelles Histoires Extraordinaires*, translated by Charles Baudelaire in 1857. Other stories mention the peddling of a Canadian edition of George Eliot’s *Jubal*, recall readings and rereadings of *Little Women*, and describe the problems associated with lists of “ghostly books” and imaginary libraries. The book concludes with a Short Title List of books discussed and an Index.


Written as a “practical guide to manuscript gilding,” this book opens with a chapter on “Origins” that is intended to “trace the development of ... three technological advances essential to the eventual flowering of manuscript gilding: the practice of gilding itself, the adoption of parchment as a writing material, and the use of the codex format.” Illustrations of early three-dimensional gilding include a figure of a goat nibbling at tree branches from the ancient city of Ur (c.2600 BCE), a silver hemispheric bowl with applied gold decoration (4th to 5th century BCE), and the gilded arm of a statue (2nd and 3rd century A.D.). The move from fragile papyrus to the more durable parchment (often dyed purple), which produced a rich surface for gold and silver lettering, was followed in the first century BCE by the introduction of the easily-stored and portable codex, coinciding with the spread of Christianity and the popularity of sacred texts.

Chapter two, on “Manuscript Gilding and Illumination” focusses on the gilding of sacred Christian texts (with specific examples) ranging from scrolls of the late Roman era, to codices of the late antique and early Byzantine eras, through texts illuminated during the Carolingian, Romanesque, later Medieval, and Renaissance periods, to the revival of illuminated calligraphy in the nineteenth century by William Morris and Graily Hewitt. Chapter three focuses on equipment and materials for the gilder’s workshop, chapter four on preparing mordants for flat gilding, chapter five on preparing

First published in 1995 by the Bird & Bull Press in a limited edition of 200 copies, this new edition of Middleton’s *Recollections* has an expanded text and illustrations. The renowned book restorer and binder did his first binding at the age of 12 and began his apprenticeship at the British Museum Bindery at the outbreak of the Second World War, at age 16. He began working with books damaged by bombs, then joined the army. Following the War, he worked as a Craftsman-Demonstrator at the Royal College of Art, where he surrounded himself by the best teachers. Later, he was appointed the manager of Zachrsdorf Limited, an internationally known firm of bookbinders, where one of his most memorable experiences was the task of rebinding *The Book of Kells*.

In the early 1950s Middleton went into business for himself, setting up in two rooms in London’s Soho district. At about the same time, he began writing articles on binding for such journals as *Paper and Print* and *British Colonial Bookbinding*, and in 1963 he published *A History of English Craft Bookbinding Technique*, the first of several books and exhibition catalogues. Middleton’s autobiography is peppered with stories about business dealings, friends, and associates, and with amusing anecdotes, problems, and occasional mistakes made with particular bindings. The book concludes with descriptions and illustrations of 90 significant bindings (46 in colour), reproductions of apprenticeship documents and a few short articles, and a bibliography of writings by and about Middleton.