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MODERN BOOK DESIGN

Modern Book Design

from William Morris
to the present day
by

RUARI MCLEAN

40931

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McL

LONDON
FABER & FABER
1958

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For my Father

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R.McL.

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Chapter 1

The Nature of Book Design

Whether for poems or prescriptions, words are tools, to be used in various ways for specific purposes. Once they are down on paper out of their author's head, the job of communication is only half done, for they must then be passed on to their public, which means, in the present context, they have to be designed and printed. Designing for print is a continuation of the work of writing. Ideally, the author, having done the writing, should then do the designing. Sometimes he does, but not always successfully; for while the necessary technical knowledge can be easily learned, the kind of imagination required for designing is different from that required for writing. In what does that kind of imagination consist? It is as hard to define as the qualities of good writing. Perhaps the following pages may illuminate some aspects of it in recent book printing.

Not all books are literature, and not all books are designed for continuous reading: for example, telephone directories, cookery-books, even dictionaries. But, in the following pages, the word 'book' will imply literature, for it is in the plain reading-page that the problems of book design are at their simplest and most fundamental. It is the plain reading-page that the book designer must learn to design first—and will return to in his maturity.

It must not be thought that designing a telephone directory is not also an important and fascinating problem. Many questions will be raised which will not be capable of factual answer; there will be plenty of room for imagination and invention. By comparison, designing a new edition of, say, *The Book of Job*, may be technically far simpler. But the quality of spirit that the designer must put into an edition of *Job* will be different; and deeper.

The art of the book designer, it has often been said, is a self-effacing art. Nothing, we agree, must come between author and reader. Good printing is not, however, characterless, or colourless, like glass. The book designer's job is, in some ways, analogous to the actor's: both have to serve the author—and please the audience. In the theatre, we can enjoy Shakespeare *and* Olivier; while reading a book, we can enjoy Coleridge and—although we probably will not know the typographer's name—Bruce Rogers. Typography is an entirely ancillary art; but a handmaiden may be graceful. Human beings are not so simple that they can enjoy only one pleasure at a time. 'Typography is the efficient means to an essentially utilitarian and only accidentally aesthetic end, for enjoyment of patterns is rarely the reader's chief aim' wrote Dr Stanley Morison in a famous essay.[1] It depends. While reading a book we can also be deeply enjoying an apple, an armchair, the sound of the rain, the smell of wood-smoke, and, let it be asserted, the 'patterns' of the typographer. Serious reading, as Holbrook Jackson pointed out, is a creative act, and in that act the book designer has his part. It is an infinitely humbler and obscurer part than that of the original writer, but it must be played, and it can be played rightly or wrongly. If the designer interferes at all between author and reader, he may offend. 'Even dullness and monotony in the typesetting are far less vicious to a reader than typographical eccentricity or pleasantry,' wrote Dr Morison in the essay already quoted. Which means that the reading page itself must be plain: calligraphic initials for every paragraph, for example, would almost certainly be an interference. But within the rules, partly conventional, partly functional, which govern the setting of type for convenient reading, there is room for variety and imagination in the treatment of margins, chapter headings, initials, running headlines, footnotes, in the design of the title-page, in the choice of paper, ink and binding. All these should come from a unified conception in the designer's mind. They should not be impersonal, any more than a good actor is impersonal. Good book design is

[1] S. Morison, 'First Principles of Typography' in *The Fleuron*, No. 7, 1930.

personal. But all its personality must be directed to the end of serving author and reader.

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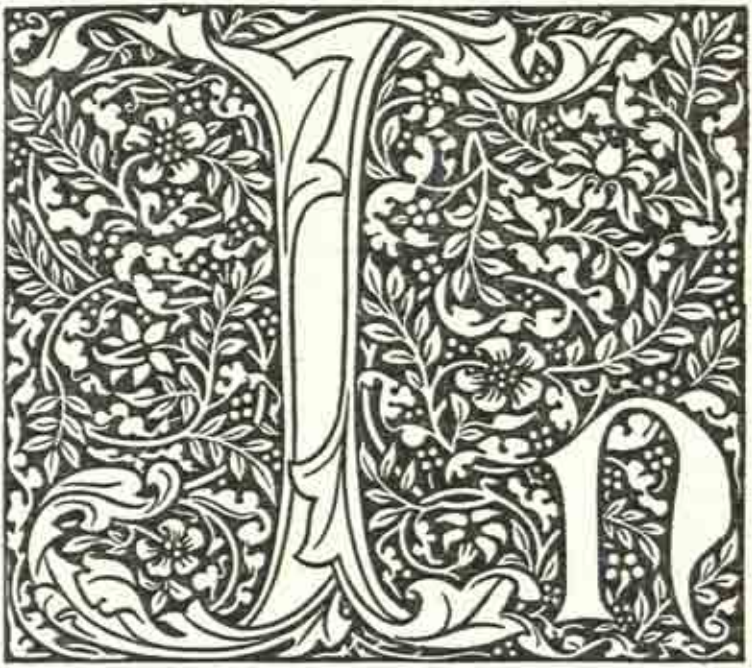


GRECE WHYLOM WEREN brethren two,

Initial designed by William Morris for the Kelmscott *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, 1892.

Chapter 2

The Need for Revival

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the standard of book design in England was very high: but after the deaths of the great printers Bensley in 1824 and Bulmer in 1830 it gradually began to decline.

The techniques of book printing, type-founding, and paper-making in 1800 were basically unchanged from the fifteenth century, when printing was invented.

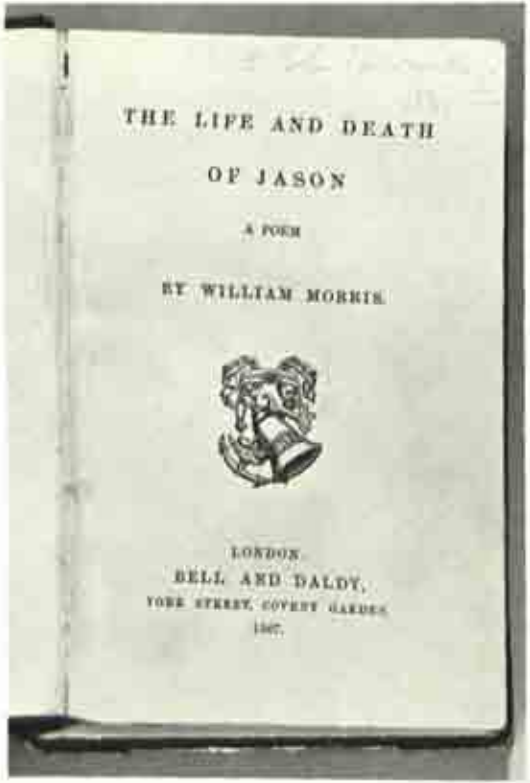
Types, being all cut and cast by hand, were limited in quantity, and had to be used again and again until worn out. As for type design, there existed in 1800 several varieties of roman, but very few printers indeed possessed a choice in their own establishment.

Ink was made by most printers for their own use. The type was inked by dabbing with the traditional leather-covered balls. The composition roller was invented about 1818 and took about twenty years to become universal.

If a book was to be illustrated, the choice was between wood-blocks or copper plates, for etching, engraving, or aquatinting. If illustrations were coloured, they were painted by hand in water-colour. Lithography, invented in Germany in 1796, did not begin to be used for book illustration until the eighteen-twenties.

Bookbinding was, like everything else, a hand process, and leather was the only material used, unless a special material like silk or velvet was called for. Cloth was not a binding material until just before 1830.

The quality of book design, as of many other hand-crafts, gradually deteriorated as the effects of the Industrial Revolution multiplied. During the nineteenth century, the printing industry mechanized itself in every department. Invention followed inven-



THE LIFE AND DEATH

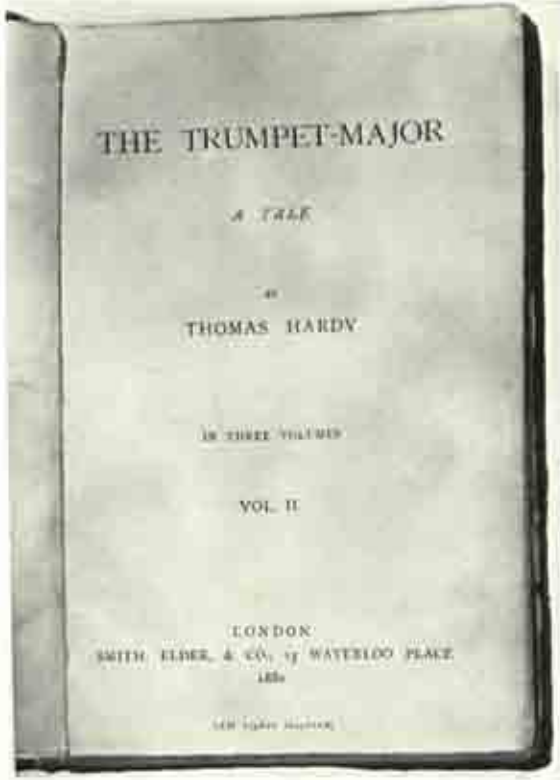
OF JASON

A POEM

BY WILLIAM MORRIS

LONDON:
BELL AND DALDY,
YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
1867.

1a. *The Life and Death of Jason*, 1867. $6\frac{3}{8}'' \times 4\frac{1}{4}''$. Printed at the Chiswick Press, thirteen years after the death of William Pickering, but in his excellent style.



THE TRUMPET-MAJOR

A TALE

BY

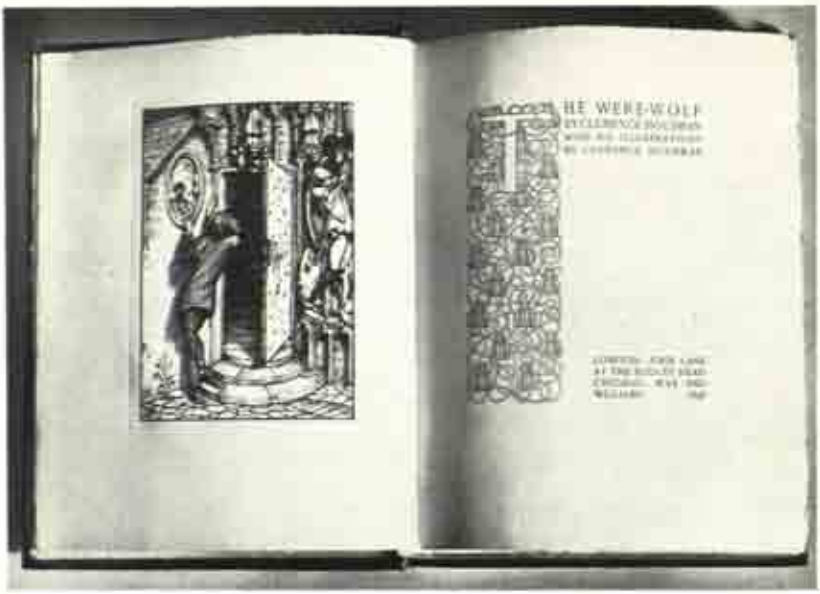
THOMAS HARDY

IN THREE VOLUMES

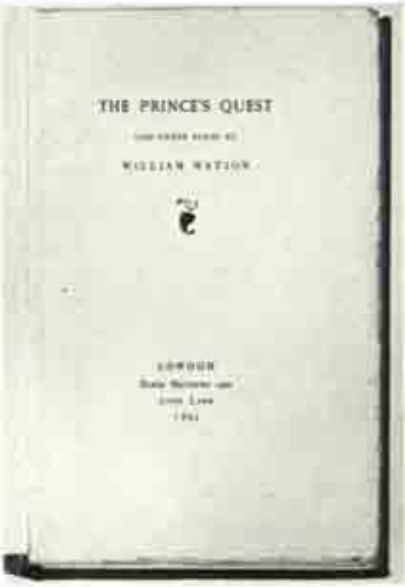
VOL. II

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE.
1880.

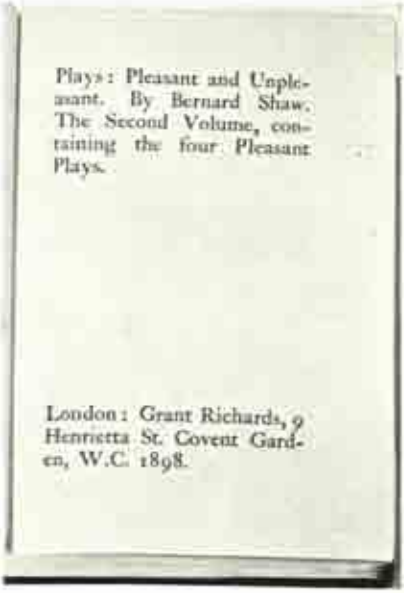
1b. *The Trumpet-Major*, 1880. $7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5''$. Printed in feeble types, arranged without purpose.



2a. *The Were-wolf*, 1896. $7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5\frac{3}{4}''$. New design ideas of the nineties, by Laurence Housman. The illustration is in black, the title-page entirely in ochre. Riverside Press, Edinburgh.



2b. *The Prince's Quest*, 1893. $6\frac{3}{4}'' \times 4\frac{1}{4}''$. A carefully designed title-page. T. & A. Constable, Edinburgh.



2c. *Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant*, 1898. $6\frac{7}{8}'' \times 4\frac{5}{8}''$. Shaw's first use of his off-centre formula. R. & R. Clark, Edinburgh.

tion, greatly increasing not only output, but also the number of things printers could do. The invention of photography, for example, made possible the line and half-tone process block, which revolutionized the relationship between artists and the printed page.

The process of deterioration was slow. During the middle years of the century, beautiful books were being designed by the publisher William Pickering (1796–1854) in conjunction with the printer Charles Whittingham the younger (1795–1876). When Pickering died, the inspiration died too, but a tradition remained. During the last half of the century it was maintained by Charles T. Jacobi, who had been apprenticed to Whittingham in 1868 and was manager of the Chiswick Press from 1882 till 1919. Many of the books he printed were extremely well designed.

Attractive books also came, at this time, from a number of other presses: for example, the charming extravagances in chapbook tradition by Joseph Crawhall, printed at Newcastle in the seventies and eighties; the books designed and published by Andrew Tuer at the Leadenhall Press in London; the numerous children's picture-books illustrated by Richard Doyle, Arthur Hughes, Randolph Caldecott, Walter Crane and others; and in plain book-printing, the work of the two great Edinburgh firms, R. and R. Clark and T. and A. Constable. Books bearing the imprints of these two firms during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century would not suggest that the art of book design had declined in Great Britain.

Yet it was not in a healthy state. Good work was being done, but it was exceptional. The average was low, perhaps lower than it had ever been. It was low, not as in previous periods of poor printing, in the quality of press-work or materials: Victorian technique was superb when it wanted to be. An average Victorian title-page such as, for example, that of the first edition of Thomas Hardy's *The Trumpet-Major* (Pl. 1b) fails because it was produced, not in bad taste, but in no taste. There is no sign of any thoughtful intention at all in the arrangement of the type. It sprawls without coherence or plan: it could be moved up or down without spoiling the effect.

The compositor who set it up was, in that respect, untrained. The dismal lack of style of a late nineteenth-century middle-class villa is paralleled in many contemporary book pages, set in spidery types, over-widely spaced, with unplanned margins. They are not actively ugly, they are worse, for they are negative.

In addition, the introduction of mechanical methods of punch-cutting and type-casting quickly produced a whole race of display types and initials whose only virtue was technical. They boasted a sort of spindly complication which had previously been beyond the type-caster's art. The worst excesses of this kind of perverse invention were found more in periodicals and jobbing printing than in books. Some fairly horrible designs were cut in brass for bindings.

A few of the decorative type-faces invented by the Victorians were magnificent: but the best ones, the most robust, were used for advertising, and only the weaker ones found their way on to book pages.

In short, the typical fault of Victorian book design was feebleness. The Victorians were often vigorous and exciting when shouting their wares: but when they tried to design an elegant title-page, their failures were pale and dowdy. Such books will never, one may predict, attain even period charm.

Ruskin was the first and greatest of those who protested against the ugliness of the late nineteenth century, but he never interested himself seriously in printing: one wonders, with some qualms, what might have happened if he had. It was William Morris who became the leader of the revival of book design when he founded the Kelmscott Press in 1890.

Tailpiece by Bruce Rogers for *Pan's Pipes*, 1910

Chapter 3

William Morris

William Morris was a poet and a designer, a man who spent his life dreaming and then, with superabundant energy and invention, making. It was logical that he should become some day involved in the craft of printing, that activity in which words and design most conspicuously meet. The Kelmscott Press, which he founded in 1890, in his fifty-sixth year, was the climax of his life's work, and, perhaps, his greatest artistic achievement.

When at the age of twenty-two Morris founded the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, he went to the Chiswick Press for its printing, as a hundred years later he might have gone to the Curwen Press: it was the best of its time. He went to the Chiswick Press again for the printing of his earliest books, the *Defence of Guinevere* (1858) and *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867), both published at his own expense. The *Defence of Guinevere*, which contains such poems as 'Rapunzel', 'The Haystack in the Floods', and 'Two Red Roses across the Moon', is a charming example of the Chiswick Press style, with Mary Byfield wood-engraved head-pieces and initials: one could not wish a better format for those poems. *The Life and Death of Jason* (printed after Charles Whittingham had retired from active management of the Chiswick Press) has no ornamentation, but, to our eyes, is also an extremely well printed little book (Pl. 1a). To Morris these books probably did not seem so satisfying.

In 1866 and again in 1871 Morris planned a fine edition of one of his own works: blocks were designed and engraved by Morris and Burne-Jones and, for the first book, *The Earthly Paradise*, specimen pages were set up at the Chiswick Press, in Caslon and

in the Chiswick Basel type;[1] but both projects were abandoned, due partly to cost and partly to the author's dissatisfaction with the work.[2] Morris continued, however, to study letter-forms, collected manuscripts, and intermittently practised calligraphy. One of his own manuscripts is in the British Museum and another is in the Fitzwilliam at Cambridge. It was during this pre-Kelmscott period that he made Bernard Shaw interested in book design, as described below.

Morris's decision to involve himself actively in printing finally came from his friendship with that great printing technician Emery Walker (1851–1933) who happened to be his neighbour on the riverside at Hammersmith from 1883; the date can even be fixed as November 15th, 1888, when Emery Walker gave his lecture on Printing at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in London. The lecture was printed, over the names of Morris and Walker, in *Arts and Crafts Essays* (1893); again, by the Chiswick Press, but in a dumpy format that would probably not have commended itself to Pickering and Whittingham. The square white canvas back and blue paper sides are in the Kelmscott, not the Chiswick, style.

The lecture does not mention any other kind of printing than books, although it was in general jobbing printing that design had gone farthest astray. It begins with a historical survey of type-design, awards modified praise to Caslon, and condemns the 'modern' faces of Baskerville, Bodoni and Didot. It goes on to recommend even and careful word-spacing, to avoid 'rivers of white' on the page, and stresses the importance of paper. Probably the most important part of the lecture was the slides of manuscripts and fine early printing which accompanied it. The historical approach was vital. The real foundations of the present-day revival of book design lie in the researches of Dr Stanley Morison and others, which began some twenty years after Walker's lecture.

At the time the 1888 lecture was a great stimulus to interest. It was the first public exposition of the principles underlying what

[1] Shown in De Vinne, *Plain Printing Types*, p. 199 and T. B. Reed, *A History of the Old English Letter Foundries* (1952), p. 366.
[2] See H. Halliday Sparling, *The Kelmscott Press*, London, 1924, and J. W. Mackail, *Life of William Morris*.

was to become a new movement; and it came opportunely. A vast new reading public was being created by the Elementary Education Act of 1870, and in the course of the next few years the technical possibilities of printing, already great, were even further increased by the inventions of photogravure, process block-making, and machine composition. In 1888 it was seen, perhaps most clearly by Emery Walker, that although new techniques were being invented and developed daily, the knowledge of how best to use these new techniques was lacking.

The person in whom the lecture and the slides generated most enthusiasm was William Morris himself. It fired him with the desire to design and possess a type-face of his own. But when Morris undertook a craft he undertook it thoroughly, and he soon found that he needed to be in complete control of all the processes of printing and to have them under his own roof. In 1890, with the help of Emery Walker (who was invited to be a partner in the enterprise, but who 'having some sense of proportion', as he said later, declined) the Kelmscott Press was founded in Morris's Hammersmith house. Though Emery Walker had refused financial interest, he was, in Sir Sydney Cockerell's words, 'virtually a partner in the Kelmscott Press from its first beginnings to its end and no important step was taken without his advice and approval'.[1]

A design for a type-face was evolved by Morris, based on Venetian roman founts of *c.* 1476, and called the Golden type. It was cut by Edward Prince, and cast at the Fann Street Foundry, where Talbot Baines Reed was Managing Director. While this was going on, an enthusiastic paper-maker was found in Joseph Batchelor, near Ashford, Kent, willing to make experiments to produce a paper as close as possible to a Bolognese paper of about 1473, which Morris had selected as being his ideal. The experiments were successful, and all the Kelmscott books were printed on one of three varieties of this paper. The paper continued to be made at Batchelor's Mill and sold under the name of 'Kelmscott Handmade' until 1944.

[1] S. C. Cockerell, *A Short History and Description of the Kelmscott Press.*

A hand-press was bought, a compositor and pressman engaged, and in 1891 the first printing began. In 1896 Morris died. The Kelmscott Press, when wound up in 1898, had printed 18,234 copies of 53 books.

No one can judge typography, least of all the typography of hand-printed books such as the Kelmscott, without having handled, as well as seen, the actual books. The feel of the paper and the colour of the ink and impression of the types on the paper are essential parts of the whole. The Kelmscott *Chaucer*, the greatest work undertaken by the Press, is a magnificent artifact: almost incredible when looked at as but an incident in the life of a busy man.[1] Morris's prolific invention of ornament alone is amazing: page succeeds page, filled with elaborate tracery and with greater or smaller decorated initials, all designed by Morris, and nearly all cut on wood by W. H. Hooper. And Burne-Jones's wood-cuts, also cut on wood by Hooper, are superb in themselves, and superbly in place.[2] The Kelmscott *Chaucer* is not only William Morris's monument, it can stand, with the Albert Memorial and the Forth Bridge, as a memorial of the virility of the Victorians.

However, merely a quick look at Kelmscott books will suffice to show that the revival of printing in this century has not been based on William Morris's typography. His books were magnificent, but they did not point directly to the way contemporary printers needed to go. Morris's strong sense of decoration (he wrote 'It was only natural that I, a decorator by profession, should attempt to ornament my books suitably') was definitely medieval in inspiration, for one thing; for another, he was a rich man, making books for rich men. Why, particularly since he was a Socialist, and print-

[1] 'The printing had occupied a year and nine months. Besides Burne-Jones's 87 pages, it contains a full-page woodcut title, 14 large borders, 18 borders or frames for the pictures and 26 large initial words. All of these, besides the ornamental initial letters large and small, were designed by Morris himself, as was the white pigskin binding with silver clasps, executed at Mr. Cobden-Sanderson's bindery by Mr. Douglas Cockerell, in which the Kelmscott Chaucer received its complete form.' J. W. Mackail, *Life of William Morris*.

[2] Bruce Rogers says of these illustrations: 'If any of you have ever seen Burne-Jones's original pencil drawings for the Chaucer, you will know what beauty of line has been lost in their stilted translation into wood blocks.' *The Work of Bruce Rogers; A Catalogue*, New York, O.U.P., 1939, p. xli.

ing is the supremely easy way to provide good design and great art cheaply for all, did he not show how common printing could be improved? Why did he not forestall Penguin Books?

It is possible that Morris, like Ruskin, did not believe very much in cheap books. And certainly he was the sort of socialist who wished to raise everyone up to his own level, rather than come down to theirs.

But in any case he was not preaching socialism when designing Kelmscott books: he was creating beauty; he was a poet and artist. 'I began printing books,' wrote Morris, in his own statement of his aims in founding the Kelmscott Press, 'with the hope of producing some which would have a definite claim to beauty, while at the same time they should be easy to read and should not dazzle the eye, or trouble the intellect of the reader by eccentricity of form in the letters.'

Morris lived in a new world of mass-production, a world in which most of the things being mass-produced were ugly. The first need was to make beautiful things, and the only way he could make them was by hand. When he turned to printing, with the aims stated above, he saw, absolutely rightly, that he must go back to the beginnings, to the time when printing was 'perfect' (because modelled on handwriting which was the culmination of many centuries of human striving after perfection and beauty) and learn everything he could from those who, in his opinion, had printed the most beautiful books ever produced.

He went to one of the very best models for his roman type design, but his rendering of it was not faithful and his modifications, in the direction of thickening and coarsening, seem to our eyes ill-advised. Nor have his gothic types, the Troye and the Chaucer, lasted well: they make fine black pages but we balk at reading them. It does not matter. In all the other details, in his wide and carefully proportioned margins, his insistence that the unit of a book is not one but a pair of pages, and his use of the finest ink, paper and binding materials, he taught sound lessons even to commercial printers. He was not concerned with profit (although the fact that the Kelmscott Press made a profit was not

unnoticed) nor was he trying to show anybody how to print. He was only trying to show how beautiful a printed book might be. The magnificence of the experiment, and Morris's exuberant personality, had very widespread influence which was soon felt and seen throughout the printing trade of England, Europe and the United States. Those who merely copied his style (and they were not few) went on using herbaceous borders and poor lettering for twenty-five years or so (the *Everyman* Kelmscott end-papers and title-pages indeed lasted until 1935); but others looked, learned, and then found a way for themselves.

It must not be thought that William Morris was unaware of the principles that must underlie the design and production of ordinary books. Some of his own remarks make salutary reading today. For example, he wrote: 'I lay it down, first that a book quite unornamented can look actually and positively un-ugly, if it be, so to say, architecturally good, which, by the by, need not add much to its price....' And: 'if machine-made paper must be used, it should not profess fineness or luxury; but should show itself for what it is. For my part, I decidedly prefer the cheaper papers that are used for the journals, so far as appearance is concerned, to the thick, smooth, sham-fine papers on which respectable books are printed, and the worst of these are those which imitate the structure of hand-made papers'. He also mentioned 'books whose only ornament is the necessary and essential beauty which arises out of the fitness of a piece of craftsmanship for the use for which it is made'.

Curwen Press colophon drawn by Percy Smith.

Chapter 4

The United States

In New York the printing situation in the 1880's was very similar to that in London: technical advances had raced far ahead of design.

America's greatest technical achievement was the solution of the problem of setting type by machine, which had for many years baffled inventors on both sides of the Atlantic. When it worked, it represented the biggest single change in methods of book production since printing had been invented.

Many attempts to mechanize the 400-year-old hand process of type composition had been made during the nineteenth century, and some were partially successful; but the type had generally to be spaced by hand, and nearly always to be distributed by hand after use. At last the idea was conceived of a machine which would actually make its own types before composing them. This meant that, among other advantages, the printer would always start with new types, and that the troublesome labour of distribution would be avoided, since, when the printing was finished, the types would be thrown into the pot for melting down to be remade for the next job.

Two machines capable of doing this were invented in America one after the other in the eighteen-nineties, the Linotype, which cast the type a whole line at a time, each line being a solid 'slug' of metal, and the Monotype, which cast individual types, interchangeable with the standard kind already existing.

But every Linotype or Monotype machine needs a matrix for every type it casts; and although there are only 26 letters in our alphabet, there may be over 250 characters[1] in one size alone of a

[1] Roman caps, roman lower-case; italic caps, italic lower-case; bold caps, bold lower-case; small caps; roman and italic figures; accented letters and punctuation marks.

fount of type. Matrices are made by punches. And punches are fragile things which break pretty often. More punches were suddenly required than could ever be cut by hand; and no way of making them by machine could be found. The whole venture of machine composition was on the point of failure. But in 1890 a member of the Linotype Company in New York discovered by accident that a punch-cutting machine had been invented (for quite another purpose) some six years earlier, by one Linn Boyd Benton in Milwaukee. That made machine composition possible. The Benton mechanical punch-cutter—which works on the pantographic principle from an enlarged model of the letter—is now an integral part, in one form or another, of the equipment of every manufacturer of composing machines in the world.

As far as the design of printing was concerned, there were in the last quarter of the nineteenth century three printing presses in America where good work was being done: the University Press at Cambridge, Massachusetts, under the direction of John Wilson, the Riverside Press at Cambridge (owned by the publishing firm of Houghton, Mifflin and Co.) and the De Vinne Press in New York.

Theodore Low De Vinne[1] (1828–1914) was during the eighties and nineties America's leading printer, and the author of a series of useful textbooks which sum up good nineteenth-century practice; the best known is *Plain Printing Types* (1899) which still today merits study by the serious typographer, although its appearance is 'chilly but workmanlike' (the phrase is Updike's, used of another book of De Vinne's). De Vinne was one of the great printers, being careful, sound, conscientious and devoted to his craft, but uninspired in design. An example of his finest work is *The Charles Whittinghams, Printers* by Arthur Warren, printed for the Grolier Club of New York in 1896. The work of which he was most proud, writes an American authority,[2] was *The Bishop Collection: Investigations and Studies in Jade*, which was fourteen years in the making and appeared in 1906.

[1] See 'T. L. De Vinne', by C. P. Rollins, *Signature* (New Series) 10, London 1950.
[2] Ruth Shepard Granniss in *The Dolphin*, Vol. 3, New York, 1938, p. 275.

De Vinne was a scholar-printer; Daniel Berkeley Updike (1860–1941), the next famous name in American printing, was that too, but in addition had originality and discrimination as a designer.

Updike was born in Providence, Rhode Island; his mother was an Adams and 'brought him up with an intellectual and cultural background that, all his life long, placed him on a level of superiority to nearly everybody with whom he had contacts'.[1]

At the age of 20 he went to Boston to begin at the bottom (viz. as errand-boy) in the publishing house of Houghton, Mifflin and Co. After resigning, and being reinstated with more responsible work, and then spending two years in the firm's printing department, the Riverside Press at Cambridge—where he both learned and had much to contribute—he finally left and opened an office with his own imprint and, gradually, his own printing equipment, under the title of the Merrymount Press, Boston. His aims, and some of his early experiences, have been described so merrily by himself,[2] that every word by another hand seems maladroit. The reader is hereby recommended to the source.

His first book was *Vexilla Regis*, 1893, printed for him at the Riverside Press. His first major work was *The Altar Book*, which came out in 1896 and was probably the finest piece of liturgical printing that had ever been done in the United States. The specially designed type-face and decorative borders, by Bertram Goodhue, were very much in the Kelmscott style. The machining was carried out by De Vinne. Thereafter Updike went his own way and established his own style. His knowledge, his tastes, and his supplies of paper and type were fed by numerous visits to Europe. It is safe to say that no piece of printing, whether it was a book, a letter-heading or an *ex libris* slip, ever left the Merrymount Press looking 'ordinary': everything was of a quiet but noticeable distinction. Many of his books were indeed of outstanding beauty; and to study a collection of Merrymount title-pages is a refreshing experience. Updike, under a dry exterior, was no puritan as a

[1] *D. B. Updike*, by G. P. Winship, 1947.
[2] D. B. Updike. *Notes on the Merrymount Press and its work*, Harvard University Press, 1934. Reprinted in *Updike; American Printer*, New York, 1947

typographer and many of his title-pages were positively exotic. He revelled in decoration and with his unerring taste managed to be simultaneously original and traditional. Even when using entirely traditional material he was never simply imitative: but he also made frequent and brilliant use of the decorative talents of several rising American book-illustrators, including Rudolph Ruzicka, T. M. Cleland and W. A. Dwiggins.

Updike's great book *Printing Types* was published in 1922 and will be mentioned later.

When Updike left the Riverside Press the directors of that firm realized that their late employee's ideas were sounder business sense than they had thought. Having failed to persuade him to return, they appointed a young man aged 25 to do the job, and so Bruce Rogers joined the Riverside Press, Cambridge, in 1895.

Rogers, born in Linnwood, Indiana, had set out to become an illustrator, and worked first for the *Indianapolis News*, and then as a general illustrator. Some time after 1890 he was shown some Kelmscott Press books and they came as a revelation: 'his whole interest in book-production became rationalized and intensified'.[1] He, too, must have passed through a Kelmscott period, but he did it rapidly and D. B. Updike noted later that 'his first book issued by The Riverside Press was the production of an accomplished master of his art'.[2]

Rogers stayed with the Riverside Press till 1911, and during his sixteen years there made both his own name and that of the Press famous in book-making circles. It must be admitted that in those early days of his career he owed much to the example and influence of Updike at nearby Boston: many of the graceful Merrymount title-pages were quickly and closely echoed at Cambridge, especially those with drawn, as opposed to typographic, decoration, in which Updike was a real innovator.[3] But perhaps the lesson

[1] 'On the Work of Bruce Rogers', by Frederic Warde. *The Fleuron*, No. 4, London, 1925.

[2] *The Work of Bruce Rogers, A Catalogue*, New York, 1939, p. xi.

[3] For illustrations of both Updike's and Rogers's work, see S. Morison's *Four Centuries of Fine Printing*, London, 1924, and *Modern Fine Printing*, London, 1925; and Simon and Rodenberg's *Printing of Today*, London, 1928.

most to be learned was restraint, for as far as ideas and fertility of invention were concerned, Rogers had plenty of his own. The variety and range of styles displayed in the output of both Merrymount and Riverside Presses at this time was most impressive, and had a healthy influence on the future of book design in the United States: it far outstripped anything that was being done in Britain at the same time.

It was during his earliest days at the Riverside Press that Rogers became interested in a type which was held in small quantities only, in two sizes, and known as 'copper-face', because it had been coated with copper for longer wear. It was a type that had been bought in England some thirty years earlier by H. O. Houghton, the founder of the Riverside Press: and Rogers christened it Brimmer after a Bostonian author for whose books it had been used. He made such good use of it that the Riverside Press were persuaded to have it reproduced by electrotype matrices by the American Type Founders Company, and it then went into more or less constant use. Not surprisingly, the same type had been previously admired by D. B. Updike when he was at the Riverside Press; and he, after discovering that the punches and matrices were still held by the English type-founding firm of Stephenson, Blake and Company, had installed it as a staple face of the Merrymount Press under the name of Mountjoye, where it was used from 1903 onwards. It was not until 1926 that Stanley Morison discovered by chance in the Bibliothèque Nationale a document which proved that the Brimmer and Mountjoye types were in fact the design of John Bell of London, cut by Richard Austin, and first published in 1788. In 1931 the types were re-cut for machine composition by the Monotype Corporation of London, and called Bell. It is one of the most valuable book-faces in the typographer's repertoire: the face is a 'transitional' one, between the old-face and modern, with brilliantly cut serifs and a characteristic italic. The first, and perhaps still the grandest use of Monotype Bell was for Stanley Morison's *The English Newspaper*, 1932.[1]

[1] For a letter in which Bruce Rogers describes his discovery of Bell, see S. Morison, *John Bell*, Cambridge, 1930, p. 134; see also *A Tally of Types*, Cambridge, 1953.

One of the opportunities Bruce Rogers organized for himself was a series of Riverside Press Limited Editions. The first to appear, in 1900, was *The Sonnets and Madrigals of Michelangelo*, set in Caslon italic. In 1903 appeared the *Essays*[1] of Montaigne, in three folio volumes. For the title-pages of this work Rogers revived some of the magnificently decorative wood-cut borders of Geofroy Tory (*c.* 1480–1533), and the book was set in the first of his own type-designs, known as Montaigne, and based on that used for Jenson's *Eusebius* of 1470.

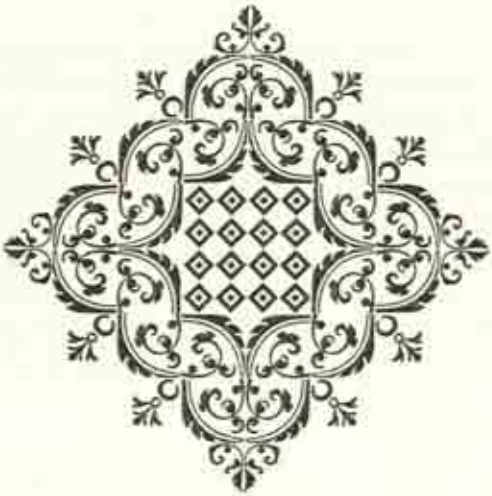
Possibly the most charming of all the books he made at this period was *The Compleat Angler*, 1909, a sixteenmo set in Riverside Caslon, an ingenious remodelling by Rogers of type-founder's Caslon which has a pleasantly idiosyncratic and archaic flavour, like the Fell types at Oxford. *The Compleat Angler* has a title-page with both a typographic border and a drawing of the Angler, and there is a clever arrangement of typographical ornaments in the prelims; but it is worth noting that the reading pages are absolutely plain.

Ingenuity in handling printer's fleurons became a characteristic of Rogers's work and he made many beautiful pages with fleuron borders and decorations. He also became adept at composing pictures purely with typographic material, and sometimes made title-pages and illustrative headings in this way, e.g. *Joseph Conrad: the man*, 1925; but this sort of work rarely succeeds in being anything more than irritatingly ingenious. Some years later W. A. Dwiggins was more successful with it than Rogers.

In 1911 Rogers became a freelance typographer and book designer, perhaps the world's first. He worked for three years in New York, doing mostly unsigned commercial work, but among his patrons was H. W. Kent, Secretary of the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Art. Rogers had by this time redrawn his Montaigne version of Jenson; and Kent, when he saw it, hailed it as a masterpiece. The Museum bought the rights to the capitals, which it had cut in several sizes: one of the most effective uses

[1] Two pages are reproduced in *The Art of the Book*, London, 1914.

Centaur



designed by Bruce Rogers and cut in numerous sizes by The Monotype Corporation. *Centaur Italic by F. Warde.*

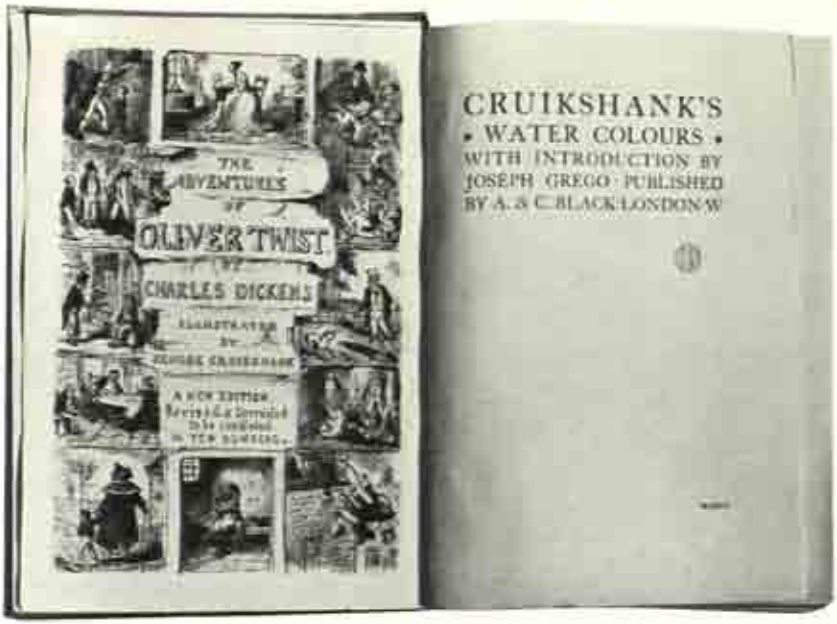
The first cutting was admirably done by Robert Wiebking, of Chicago, and though certain modifications of the design were made by him they were in almost every instance improvements on my pattern. Several of the least satisfactory letters have been re-cut from time to time in *the effort to better them. When, last year, in response to many appeals it was decided to have the type reproduced for machine composition I naturally turned to The Monotype Corporation's method of composition and casting, on account of the satisfaction I have had in the past with the results obtained by that method. Its*

made of the new letter was in gold on black labels for the Museum's collection of armour. Eventually the complete fount was cut, by Robert Wiebking, and named Centaur after the book in which it was first used, Maurice de Guérin's *The Centaur* (translated by G. B. Ives). This was printed in 1915 by Carl Purington Rollins at his Montague Press at Montague, Massachusetts, where Rogers collaborated for a short but fruitful period. (In 1918 Rollins became Printer to Yale University, which position he filled with distinction for many years.) Centaur was at least the fourth type to be based on Jenson's, for apart from Montaigne it had already provided a model for Morris's Golden type and the Doves Press type. Of Centaur, Stanley Morison has written: 'Rogers's version was a freehand emphasis of the calligraphic basis of the original. The re-drawing moved away from the original and there was produced, finally, a type that tended in some respects to be an independent design. It thus became the opposite of what Morris hated so much; an academically correct, pedantically accurate but dull and lifeless copy. Rogers's Centaur has a life of its own and a strong parental likeness to Jenson's roman'.[1]

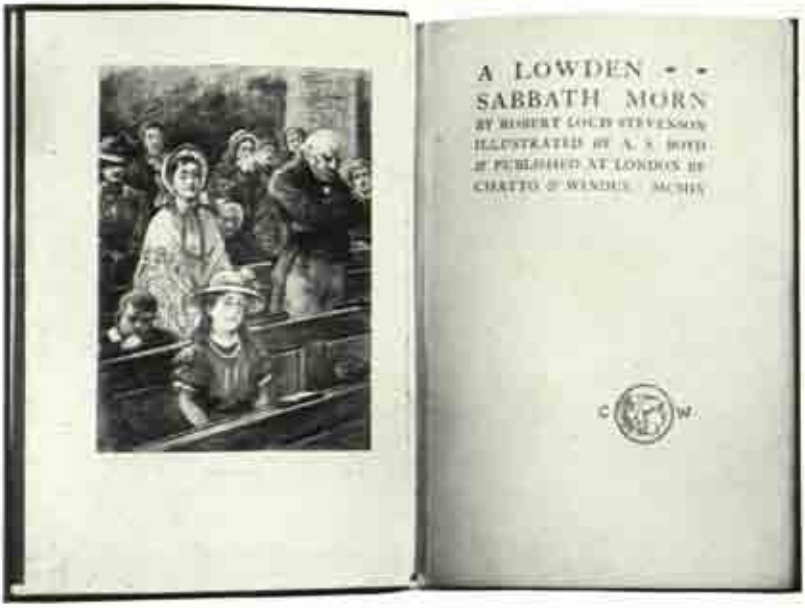
In 1929 Centaur was cut for machine composition by the Monotype Corporation of London and used for the great Oxford Lectern Bible which Rogers designed. Rogers never designed an italic for it, but this was supplied by the Arrighi italic drawn at Rogers's suggestion by Frederic Warde, after the type used by Arrighi in Rome in 1524. It was cut for Monotype composition in 1929 and is one of the most legible italics ever produced, being quite suitable (unlike most italics) for continuous reading. Centaur and Arrighi have an aristocratic distinction that lifts them out of the range of types that can be used every day, but it remains a great type-face for great uses.

In 1916 Rogers took his family to England, to join Emery Walker in establishing the Mall Press. They produced only one book, *Of the Just Shaping of Letters*, by Albrecht Dürer, translated by R. T. Nichol, of which 315 copies on paper and 3 on vellum

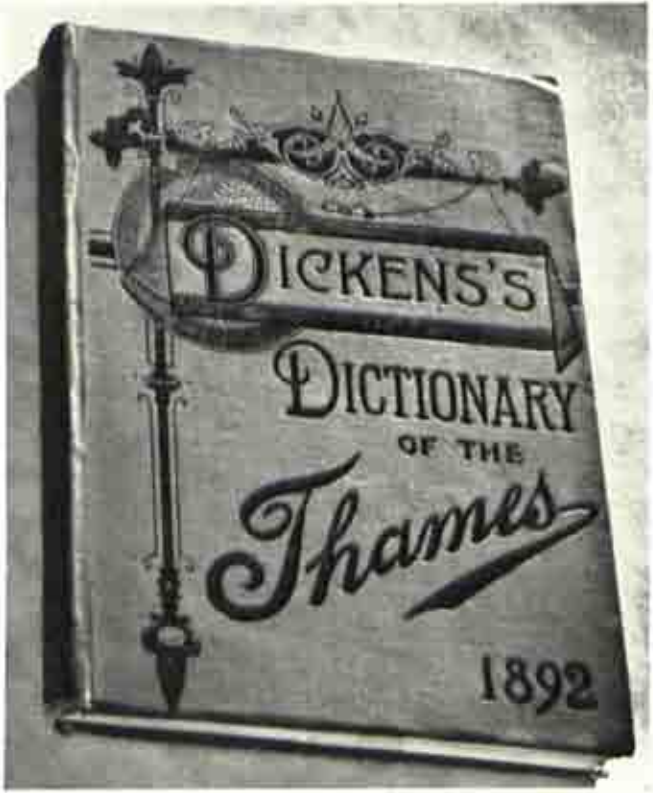
[1] S. Morison, *A Tally of Types*, Cambridge, 1953.



3a. *Cruikshank's Water Colours*, 1903. $8\frac{3}{4}'' \times 6''$. A variation of the off-centre style. The symbol is in red. R. & R. Clark, Edinburgh.



3b. *A Lowden Sabbath Morn*, 1909. $7\frac{3}{4}'' \times 5\frac{1}{4}''$. Another carefully designed off-centre title-page. The title and symbol are in red.



4a. *Dickens's Dictionary of the Thames*, 1892. $6\frac{1}{2}'' \times 4\frac{3}{4}''$. Blocked in red and black on green cloth. The 'Artistic' style of Victorian printers.

4b. *Goblin Market*, 1893. $7\frac{1}{8}'' \times 4''$. Blocked in gold on green cloth. Designed by Laurence Housman in the 'Aesthetic' movement of the nineties.

were printed in 1917 for the Grolier Club of New York, set in Centaur; the actual make-ready and printing was done by Rogers, as the one workman had just been called up for the army. The book now fetches a high price on the rare occasions when a copy comes into a sale.

Rogers was then, at the instigation of the Kelmscott Press's former Secretary Sydney Cockerell, invited to become typographical Adviser to the University Press at Cambridge. In Beatrice Warde's phrase, 'B.R. had had a chance to kick up his heels in the Centaur's paddock; he now found himself in something like an augean stable'. The Cambridge University Press was then, typographically at least, in poor shape; and Rogers, collaborating with the then Printer, J. B. Peace, had an uphill task.

The situation had in it so much that will be familiar to other designers that a letter written by Rogers at the time is worth quoting in part: 'Cambridge, while beautiful enough, is much duller a place to work in than London, of course—and the Press seldom has anything to do but the most unpromising kind of books—and these they don't need to alter much. Most of my energies are directed towards improving their spacing, margins, chapter heads, etc.—just the kind of thing that any good composing-room foreman is able to do for them—but which I got pretty tired of doing the years I was at Riverside. Occasionally there is a volume of literary essays, or a privately printed sermon or book of verse—but no-one wants to pay enough for careful work and good paper—and the general standard of presswork here is not as high as it ought to be. As I am engaged only as "printing advisor" all I can do is to call the manager's attention to what they *ought* to do. J. B. Peace, the manager, is a scientific and engineering man by training, and never attempted to run a printing business until about two years ago when he took over the Press during the War. He is a remarkably fine man and most agreeable to work with (as in fact they all are) but it is only natural that he is generally contented to stop at a thing's being correct and legible and generally decent, and one can hardly expect him to appreciate fine distinctions as to type, paper, etc. Still, he is very open-minded. and I think I have at last got

him to realize that there is something else to printing beyond just getting things correct and decent. . . .'[1]

When after nearly two years Rogers returned to the United States, he probably did not realize how much he had in fact achieved. There were a few books and pamphlets designed with restraint and distinction; and the famous Report to the Syndics which contains on its first page the best statement ever made of the aims of all book designers, so rarely attained: 'It is assumed in the following rough notes that the object of the Managers of the University Press is the production of books which shall bear, in some degree at least, the unmistakable stamp of having been issued from this Press and from no other. In other words to infuse enough of that elusive quality called *style* into its work so that (as with almost any Pickering book for instance) a glance at a perfectly plain type page shall serve to identify it, without recourse to either the title page or the imprint. I might go even further and say that a book ought almost to be identified in the dark, merely by the feel or sound of it'.

When J. B. Peace died in 1923, a Printer worthy of a University Press, and of Bruce Rogers's ideals, was found in Walter Lewis, who had been manager of the Cloister Press at Heaton Mersey; and from that day forward the Cambridge University Press has been one of the leaders in fine printing in Britain.

Before he returned to America Bruce Rogers designed a poster type for the Pelican Press, a job which enabled him to meet, and greatly influence, a young man then on his way to becoming the English arch-typographer, Francis Meynell, whose work will be described in a later chapter.

Another American who was beginning a notable career at the turn of the century was Frederic William Goudy (1865–1947), who in 1898 began to work on the first of that long series of over one hundred type-faces which he has designed and, in many cases, cut and cast himself. In 1903 he and his wife Bertha founded the Village Press, in a suburb in Chicago: the first book they printed

[1] Letter from Bruce Rogers to F. W. Goudy, 19 January 1919, reprinted in *Pi*, New York, 1953.

was the *Essay on Printing* by Emery Walker and William Morris. Goudy was essentially a lettering artist who specialized in type design. His first important type was Kennerley Old Style, and the Forum and Hadriano capitals. In 1920 he became Art Director of the American Monotype Company. The face known as Goudy Modern, perhaps his best known face in Britain, was first cut for hand composition in 1918, and recut by the Monotype Corporation in London in 1928. Goudy designed and cut special type-faces for many American Presses, including the Grabhorn and the University of California Presses.

In 1900 the influence of William Morris was widespread in America, and can be seen in at least the early work of nearly every printer at all conscious of design. Besides those already mentioned, there were also Will Bradley, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, and the Boston printers Copeland and Day, who according to Updike made the best books of the period—although, he added, they were not to his taste.[1]

Will Bradley (born in Boston in 1868) was a typographer of considerable power whose career lay more in the field of commercial and magazine design than in books. Some of his work showed the influence of Morris and some of his early drawings were pure Aubrey Beardsley. One of his most admirable achievements was the *American Chapbook*, which appeared in two volumes in 1904 and 1905. Each volume consists of a series of small 'chap-books' advertising the types and decorative material of the American Type Founders Company, one booklet being devoted, for example, to Cheltenham, which Goodhue had designed in 1896. The 'chap-books' are designed with a virility and sense of colour and pattern which are wholly captivating. Later Bradley was Art Director of the Hearst magazines and was responsible for an improvement in magazine typography throughout the United States.

Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue (1869–1924) was, like the German Peter Behrens, an architect who moved into book and type design. The mixture is seldom successful, perhaps because a good architect will not have time for anything else except buildings and a bad

[1] In *Notes on the Merrymount Press*.

architect will probably be a bad typographer. Goodhue designed the notorious Cheltenham, a feeble type which had a world-wide success until it was superseded—it is safe to say for ever—as better type-faces became available. Before designing Cheltenham, he designed the Merrymount face for D. B. Updike and provided decorations for several of the early Merrymount Press publications; but his work has now an old-fashioned, 1900-ish appearance.

The influence of William Morris and the Kelmscott Press caused a very large number of private presses to be started in America, many with more money than taste, but, also, many which produced work of value and interest. Their names, with check-lists of their publications, have been collected and published by Will Ransom in his invaluable *Private Presses and their Books* (New York, 1929). The one thing they all had in common, he notes, was a desire to print and publish, at one time in their careers, an edition of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.

Colophon for Cambridge University Press drawn by Bruce Rogers.

Chapter 5

The Private Press Movement

The Kelmscott Press was quickly imitated by numerous other private presses in Europe and America. Some were founded because their owners really wished to print books to please themselves, and those are the genuine private presses. Privacy is a quality which tends to be lost if a press's chief purpose is selling to the public, even in restricted quantities.

Private presses which produce books of which new editions are not required, or which have nothing new to say in design, cannot be of general interest; but those producing worth-while works which are either unobtainable or have never been printed, or which produce old works in a new and interesting way, are performing a useful service, especially today, when the economics of publishing are making publishers less and less interested in any book which will not sell at least 10,000 copies.

The most important private press after the Kelmscott Press was the Doves Press, founded by T. J. Cobden-Sanderson and Emery Walker in 1900. Cobden-Sanderson had been in the Arts and Crafts movement and a friend of Morris and Walker for many years. He came to printing at the age of sixty, after a life which had included preparation for Ordination in the Church of England, legal work as a barrister for the London and North-Western Railway Company and, since 1884, fine bookbinding. It is difficult in a few words to do justice to this proud, fanatic character, to whom the Book Beautiful was some kind of mystic and magic Ideal. In his own words: 'But beyond the immediate purposes of the Press—the solution of typographical problems and the monumental presentment of some of the literary creations of genius—there has always been another and a much greater purpose, of

which workmanship achieved in the great fields of literary creation and its incorporation in printed forms may, like other objects of craftsmanship, be a Prefatory Note, an Illustration and an Encouragement—the Workmanship of Life in Life itself, and its embodiment in forms of life which shall be as beautiful in life as, in imagination, are the happiest inventions of imaginative genius'.[1]

After this complicated rationalizing, the cleanness and stark simplicity of the Doves Press pages come as a sharp surprise. Cobden-Sanderson did what Morris, the born decorator, could not do: with his own type, good composition, good paper and ample margins, he made plain typography noble. As far as the future of everyday book design in Europe was concerned, Cobden-Sanderson pointed the right way and Morris did not.

The Doves Press books were never illustrated, and the only decorations were coloured initials, drawn by Edward Johnston or Graily Hewitt. The greatest book of the Press was (as it was intended to be) the Bible, in 5 volumes; it is indeed one of the noblest printed books ever made. Of it, Holbrook Jackson wrote: 'there is nothing, for instance, quite so effective as the first page of the Doves Bible, with its great red initial "I" dominating the left-hand margin of the opening chapter of Genesis like a symbol of the eternal wisdom and simplicity of the wonderful Book. Neither foliation nor arabesque could better have introduced the first verse of the Creation than this flaming, sword-like initial. This edition of the Bible in itself represents the last refuge of the complex in the simple. . . .'[2]

The Doves Bible was entirely set by hand, and printed on one hand-press. The only compositor, J. H. Mason, through Emery Walker's instigation, later became Head of the London School of Printing, where he was able to do a tremendous amount of good for the printing industry. One of his pupils was Leonard Jay, who had wide influence for good design as Head of the School of Printing in Birmingham.

For the rest, the Doves Press books show little development

[1] T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, *Catalogue Raisonné of Books Printed and Published at the Doves Press 1900–1916*. Doves Press, 1916.
[2] Holbrook Jackson, *The Eighteen-Nineties*, London, 1913.

from first to last because, as Sir Francis Meynell has pointed out,[1] Cobden-Sanderson's 'ideal' was, in fact, attained at the very start, as far as it was attainable.

The Doves type was based on Jenson's roman, re-drawn by an employee of Emery Walker under Cobden-Sanderson's supervision, and cut by E. B. Prince. It again pointed in the right direction for the future of type design, in contrast to Morris's gothic types. The letters combine well to make a fine page. Fault can be found with the way certain letters stand out, such as the 'y' (which occurs much more often in English than in Latin, in which most of Jenson's books are printed), the capital J (also infrequent in Jenson), and the question mark. In all, approximately fifty publications were issued by the Doves Press before its end in 1916.

A public quarrel developed between Cobden-Sanderson and Emery Walker over the possession of the Doves type. There was a legal agreement that the types should pass to whichever partner survived the other. But Cobden-Sanderson had already written, in a grandiloquent entry in his Journal dated 11 June 1911. 'My Last Will and Testament. To the Bed of the River Thames, the river on whose banks I have printed all my printed books, I bequeath the Doves Press Fount of Type—the punches, the matrices, and the type in use at the time of my death, and may the river in its tides and flow pass over them to and from the great sea for ever and for ever, or until its tides and flow for ever cease; then may they share the fate of all the world, and pass from change to change for ever upon the Tides of Time, untouched of other use and all else'.

And beginning with the punches and matrices in 1913, he dropped the whole lot stealthily at night into the Thames from Hammersmith Bridge, until all was gone. It would have been a magnificent gesture, if he had not already made the agreement with Emery Walker. But one feels that, perhaps, Walker might have realized what seems so clear from this distance (and from reading the Journals) that Cobden-Sanderson was a monomaniac and hardly answerable for his actions.[2] He died in 1922.

[1] Sir Francis Meynell, *English Printed Books*, London, 1948.

[2] An excellent short account of the affair is given in C. Volmer Nordlunde's *Thomas James Cobden-Sanderson* (Copenhagen, 1957).

Emery Walker, who in 1922 was 71 years old, was knighted for his services to printing in 1930 and died in 1933. The claim, made by Noel Rooke, the distinguished wood-engraver, that 'to him, more than to any other single man, is due the advance in everyday typographical design of the last half century',[1] is a remarkable one and probably true: he gave his advice and help unsparingly to all who asked for it. Bernard Newdigate, in his short tribute to Walker in *The Fleuron*, No. 4, wrote, 'Others besides myself would gladly and gratefully own that nearly everything that is worth anything in their own practice as printers comes directly or indirectly from his counsel and example'. Both through the printing and photo-engraving business (Emery Walker Ltd) which he owned, and in the numerous public committees of which he was a member, he wielded wide and wise influence. Among the most important of these was perhaps his work for the London County Council in the establishing and guiding of Schools of Printing. His influence on German printing was also immense, through his collaboration with Count Harry Kessler mentioned on page 67 below. A biographer is more badly needed for Sir Emery Walker than for any other figure in the printing history of the period.

The Ashendene Press, the third of the great trilogy of English Private Presses, was founded in 1894 by C. H. St John Hornby, then aged 27 and a newly-joined member of the great bookselling and stationery firm of W. H. Smith and Son, of which in time he became senior partner. Hornby had met William Morris once, and had been fired by his example. At first he used either Caslon or the Fell types of the Oxford University Press, but in 1901 he had a special type cut and cast for his own use. It was based on the Subiaco type used by Sweynheym and Pannartz, the two Germans who took printing over the Alps into Italy. In design it is half-way between gothic and roman. Morris had intended to base a type on it, and it was his drawings, prepared but never used, that Hornby took over (at Sydney Cockerell's suggestion) and had cut by E. B. Prince. The Subiaco type is strong and black, and has great beauty, but few today would choose to read a book in it.

[1] Article on Sir Emery Walker, *Penrose Annual*, 1954.

Many of the Ashendene books were illustrated, but not adventurously or memorably. Coloured initial letters were drawn by Edward Johnston, Graily Hewitt and others. The Press was wound up in 1935. It was the relaxation of a wealthy business man, but it was by no means a 'toy': the Ashendene books bear the marks of Hornby's character. While they were being made they gave employment and inspiration to many craftsmen besides Hornby himself and so had an ever-widening range of influence on more everyday manufactures: and the books themselves now take their place in the heritage of British craftsmanship.

With Hornby come some of the first links between the Arts and Crafts movement and the everyday world of commercial manufacture. For example, Hornby gave Eric Gill one of his first commissions for lettering, on a W. H. Smith book-shop in Bournemouth, from which the standardized roman lettering for all W. H. Smith shops was evolved.[1] Hornby also employed Bernard Newdigate and Joseph Thorp, and almost succeeded in introducing progressive ideas into the stationery and printing business on a common and universal level.

The most notable of the other Private Presses founded before the end of the century were the Eragny Press, 1894–1914, the Vale Press, 1896–1903, and the Essex House Press, 1898–1910. Of these, the Vale Press produced the most original work and had considerable influence on general book design. The sober vellum bindings of the Kelmscott and Doves Press books, for instance, were discarded and gayer effects reached with coloured decorative papers; and colour was more freely used inside. Charles Ricketts, the designer and proprietor, did not print the books himself but had them printed (under his close supervision on a press reserved for his work only) in the works of Ballantyne and Hanson.

The proprietor of the Eragny Press was Lucien Pissarro, who had been born in Normandy and learned wood-engraving from Auguste Lepère, one of the leaders of a new movement in book illustration in France. Pissarro's most typical work is wood-engravings printed in three or four colours. Ricketts and Charles

[1] *The Times*, 27 April 1946: Hornby's obituary notice.

Shannon at the Vale Press, and Pissarro, deserve credit for bringing wood-engravings back into the hands of artists (from professional cutters, whom even William Morris had employed to translate Burne-Jones's designs); but this movement had really begun in France, where professional cutters like Lepère had become designers.

William Morris, Cobden-Sanderson and most of the other private press printers were trying to make books as absolutely beautiful as they could be made, with their own and their employed craftsmen's hands. Such an aim could not in their day have been achieved by mass-production methods. Their books were usually hand-printed, individually embellished by hand and individually bound, so that each copy was virtually unique. This may seem to contradict the essential nature of printing, which is the duplication of identical copies. But it was the logical first step to take at that time. Inferior craftsmanship and wretched working conditions were the first problems they attacked. These books have all made, and will continue to make, an enduring contribution to the whole art and trade of printing. They are prototypes, from which publisher and apprentice alike can still derive inspiration and information. William Morris, Emery Walker, Cobden-Sanderson and the others were not so much putting the clock back (as they have been accused of doing) as winding it up again when it had stopped.

Colophon for Oxford University Press drawn by Lynton Lamb.

Chapter 6

The Movement in Britain up to 1914

The Kelmscott Press was exciting, and forced the pace of revival. But William Morris was not the only man with new ideas on book design. If he had never taken up printing, the course of progress in book design would probably have been slower but not very different. The seeds of improvement were already present in the book trade itself.

During the last twenty years of the nineteenth century there were many new currents of thought about art and literature in London and Paris. Some of them were revolutionary and some were, or tried hard to be, decadent: for example, *The Yellow Book*, started in 1894 with Aubrey Beardsley as Art Editor. In this so-called 'Aesthetic movement', book design played a special part; and it was related to commercial book production, not to private presses and limited editions. Aubrey Beardsley and Laurence Housman, for example, were the first book illustrators to accept and work for the newly-invented photo-engraved line-block.

A great interest in design is particularly evident in the productions of several young men who all established publishing firms within a few years, namely Joseph Dent (who was the first to employ Beardsley as an illustrator), established in 1888, Methuen in 1889, Elkin Mathews and John Lane *c.* 1890, William Heinemann in 1890 and Grant Richards in 1897. The best-designed books of these publishers were very good indeed, and the adjectives least applicable are 'decadent' or 'revolutionary'. They show a most sane conservatism: witness for example, *The Prince's Quest*, poems by William Watson, published by Elkin Mathews and John Lane in 1893 (Pl. 2b), and *The Golden Age* by Kenneth Grahame (who was incidentally a contributor to the 'decadent'

Yellow Book) published by John Lane in 1897. These books are conspicuous for careful and excellent design. Of greater originality are two books probably designed and certainly illustrated by Laurence Housman: the first, Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market*, Macmillan 1893, long and narrow, with an intricate pattern blocked in gold on the green cloth case (Pl. 4b); the second, a nearly square book, *The Were-wolf*, by Clemence Housman (Lane, 1896), with a title-page printed in yellow (Pl. 2a), and also a decorated case.

Other excellent examples of commercial book design at this period are the Chatto and Windus black buckram edition of R. L. Stevenson with rubricated title-pages (e.g. *Weir of Hermiston*, 1896), Macmillan's red buckram Kipling (e.g. *Kim*, 1901), and blue cloth Marryat (e.g. *Peter Simple*, 1895) and the Methuen Kiplings (e.g. *The Five Nations*, 1903).

A striking fact emerges from any examination of the printing of this period: the good work nearly all comes from a very small group of printers, and most of it from two firms in Edinburgh, R. and R. Clark and T. and A. Constable. The other firms chiefly noticed are Ballantyne, Hanson and Co., also of Edinburgh, the Chiswick Press of London, and the Cambridge University Press.

It is difficult to know whether the best books of this period were designed by printer or publisher. The fact that the same printer's imprints occur again and again suggests that it may have been the printers; but it was the publishers who paid and who therefore had to say how they wanted their books, and certain books (like Laurence Housman's) were certainly planned by publisher and author, or artist, not by the printer.

The part played by a few authors is worth noticing. One of the first was James MacNeill Whistler, who transferred a certain amount of his own dandyism into his books from 1870 onwards: see particularly *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*. There was also Robert Bridges, who designed his own books in 1883 and 1884 to be printed on the private press of the Rev. C. H. O. Daniel at Oxford, insisting that they should have an absolutely plain page

devoid of ornament. Bridges's *The Yattenden Hymnal*, printed by the Oxford University Press in 1899 in Walpergen's music types and Fell roman and italics, is a remarkable and ambitious example of book design of its day; and *The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben* (Oxford University Press, 1911), whose design was influenced by Bridges, has been described thus: 'in this charmingly appropriate octavo, traffic between author and reader is made possible on the finest terms . . . if I were asked to give an example of a perfect marriage between printing and authorship, I should name this book'.[1]

The most striking example of all is that of George Bernard Shaw. As is well known, Shaw decided early that he could himself publish, and therefore principally benefit from, his own books, and to do this he had to buy his own printing. He knew what he wanted, for he had met William Morris (before the days of the Kelmscott Press), studied Morris's collection of manuscripts, and grasped the basic principles of book design, which are, after all, so largely a matter of common sense. 'My acquaintance with Morris led me to look at the page of a book as a picture, and a book as an ornament. This led to a certain connoisseurship in types and typesetting. I chose old face Caslon as the best after Jenson. I discarded apostrophes wherever possible (dont, wont, cant, shant, etc., but not Ill, shell, hell for I'll, she'll, he'll) and banished mutton quads between sentences because they made "rivers" of white in the black rectangle of print. I was particular about margins. When I visited Chantilly I turned over every page of the famous Psalter.

'All this began with Morris and his collections of manuscripts. The Kelmscott Press came afterwards when I already knew what he was driving at'.[2]

The publisher he chose to employ to distribute his books was Grant Richards, who in his book *Author Hunting* (London, 1934) gives an entertaining picture of the young author teaching his publisher the elements of publishing and bookselling, and his

[1] Holbrook Jackson in *The Fleuron*, No. 4, London, 1925, p. 49.
[2] Quotation is from a letter from G.B.S. to the author dated 28.3.49.

printers the elements of printing. They were R. and R. Clark, who thought they knew. Battle ensued, but it was won by Shaw; and not just because he was the customer.

Authors are apt to give their printers the wildest instructions (such as that 'the proof is very nice, but of course when it's printed the type will be a bit bigger, won't it?'), so that printers have a justifiable tendency to disregard non-professional instructions and get on with their job as they think fit. However, occasionally an author comes along, such as Erasmus or William Morris or Bernard Shaw, who knows what he is talking about, and he is likely to know best.

An absolute principle of good typography (as of calligraphy) is that the words should be close together (not farther apart than the width of the letter 'i'), since one of the virtues of a page of type is in its closely woven texture, which it will lose if the words are too far apart. This evenness of texture depends also partly on the shape of the individual letters, which is why a well-composed page of Latin, with its greater proportion of up and down letters—l, m, n, u—always looks better than a well-composed page of English; hence the traditional use of Latin for printers' specimen sheets. This evenness of word spacing is easy for calligraphers to achieve since they can make adjustments as they write; and in the early days of printing it was obtained by having a very large number of alternative sorts and tied letters to represent the variableness of handwriting. But when it came to be admitted that printing was printing and not handwriting, these extra sorts were discarded. Too wide spacing between words, being easier for the compositor, became common; and the piece-work system prevalent in nineteenth-century composing rooms put a premium on it. The compositors, since they were paid for what they set, began to put in extra and totally undesirable space after full stops and other punctuation marks. Shaw fought this (it is a trouble that still crops up regularly) and for him it was especially important to have even spacing as normal, since he had decided to adopt the use of l e t t e r s p a c i n g l i k e t h i s for emphasis, instead of italic, which he used for stage instructions.

Shaw's incursion into book design is important because it was successful: his books were always recognizable, open or shut. On the shelves, there was the row of pale green spines with gold lettering (which is not, if you look closely, up to Chantilly standards) at top, middle and foot. Inside, Shaw settled on Caslon (at the time there was no good alternative) and for his title-pages he evolved a style both logical and highly unorthodox: it was to set everything in 24 point Caslon upper- and lower-case to a fixed measure, breaking words to achieve close spacing, and ending with short lines if necessary, neither centred nor spaced out.

By a miracle—for Shaw was not a designer and in fact was rather insensitive in visual matters—it worked; and Shavian title-pages, as well as the setting of the plays themselves, do not look peculiar or dated, as might have been expected, but satisfying, and even, to a typographer, exciting.

Inside, the setting of the plays (and the prefaces) was very much better than many books printed at the time; the style was established, it must be remembered, before 1900 (*Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* was the first to appear, in 1898). But they were not immune from criticism. B. H. Newdigate wrote in *The London Mercury*: 'Mr. Shaw is, according to Mr. Holbrook Jackson, a Caslon-old-face-man at any price, who believes in the "solid black unruled page".

'Although Mr. Jackson does not mention it, the chief fault in his books is the smallness of the type in which they are printed. It would be profane to suggest that Mr. Shaw himself will ever grow old, and in any case he need never read his own plays; but those of us whose sight is going dim would find them pleasanter if they were printed in Pica instead of Long Primer. Years ago Emery Walker pointed out to me that the Caslon face, beautiful as it is in the larger sizes, becomes over-thin and wiry in the sizes below Pica; and for that reason he generally prefers the smaller sizes, the small-pica or long-primer of one of the early "Old-styles" cut by Miller and Richards some fifty years since'.[1]

With Shaw's plays, progressive ideas in book design, originating

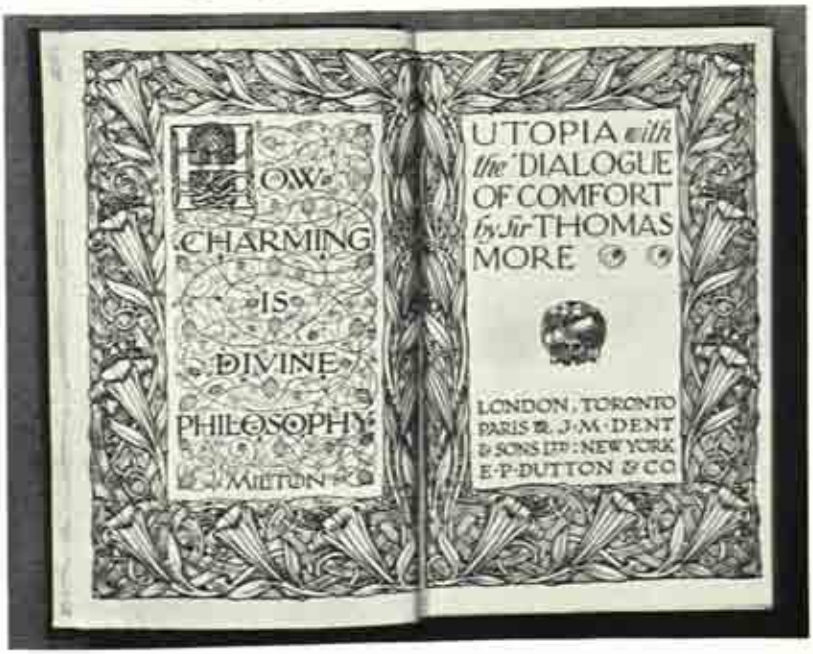
[1] Quoted in J. Thorp, *B. H. Newdigate, Scholar-Printer*, 1950.

from William Morris, were working down towards popular levels. Among the earliest to take them into mass production was Joseph Dent. His first success was the Temple Library in 1888, in a most distinguished format for its day. This was followed by the *Temple Shakespeare*, forty volumes at a shilling each, completed in 1896. For some years a quarter of a million copies in this series were sold every year and the small square format must be familiar to all who began reading Shakespeare before 'Penguins' appeared. There is more than a hint of William Morris in many of the details of these carefully designed little books.

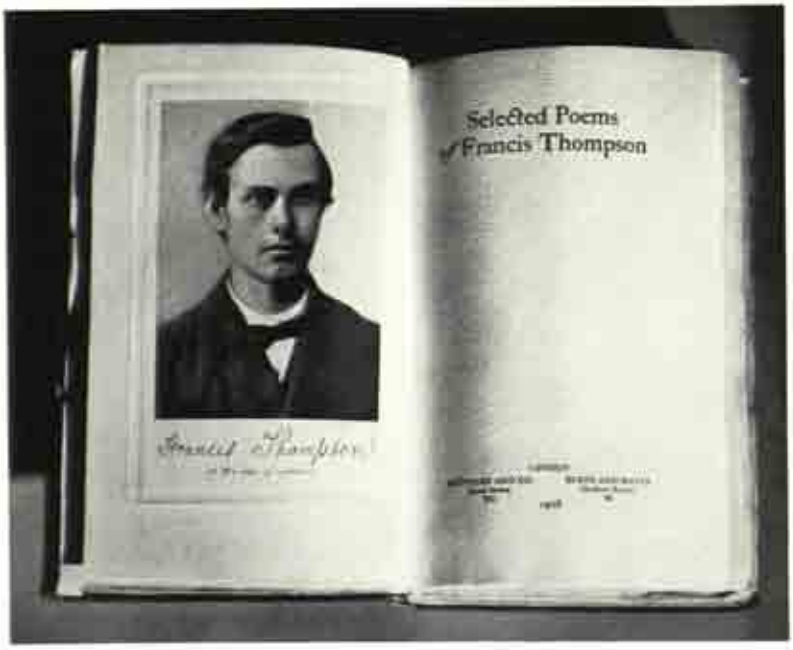
Then came the triumph of Dent's idealistic imagination: the Everyman Library. He aimed to provide all the classics of literature in a format and at a price that would suit every class of reader—'the worker, the student, the cultured man, the child, the man and the woman'; and to make them really available for everyone meant publishing volumes of up to 500 pages for a shilling—which meant printing not less than 10,000 copies of each volume to cover the basic cost, and for long books, such as Shakespeare's plays and some of Dickens's novels, as many as 20,000 or 30,000 copies. The library was founded in 1905.

It was a tremendous risk; the firm's entire capital was at stake. The venture met with immediate success, but Joseph Dent was not able to sit back and rake in the profits, even if he had been the sort of man who wanted to. On the contrary, paradoxical as it may seem, to carry the project forward at the necessary velocity kept the firm financially embarrassed for many years. Dent found, for example, that in order to cope with the production of Everyman volumes, he had to establish his own printing and binding works, and planned them on idealistic lines in the Garden City of Letchworth. The format and typography of the Everyman series are illuminating. The end-papers and double-spread title-pages were pseudo-Kelmscott (cf. Pl. 5), but the inside pages followed the normal rules of typography (preached, if not practised, by William Morris) and so have not dated at all. They were composed in a slightly condensed Old Style specially designed and cut by the Monotype Corporation. Nos. 1 and 2 in Everyman's library were

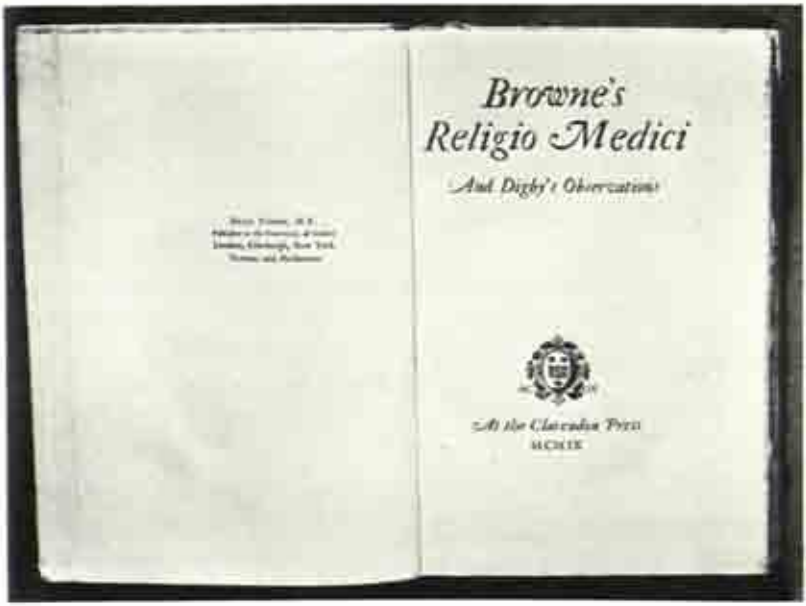
5a. *The Golden Legend*, 1892. 11⅞" × 8¼". The first wood-cut title-page designed by William Morris. Kelmscott Press.



5b. *Utopia*, 1905. 6⅞" × 4¼". The Kelmscott style adapted for the mass-produced 'Everyman' series.



6a. *Selected Poems of Francis Thompson*, 1908. $6\frac{5}{8}'' \times 4''$. Printed under the care of B. H. Newdigate at the Arden Press, Letchworth.



6b. *Religio Medici*, 1909. $7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5''$. Set in the Fell italic types and printed by Horace Hart at the Oxford University Press.

Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, and before 200 titles were reached Dent had the courage to include Grote's *History of Greece* in twelve volumes, and soon afterward Hakluyt's *Voyages*,[1] newly edited, in eight volumes. The fact that these books, extremely well edited and well made, could be put on sale at a shilling each (as they remained till 1916) was one of the earliest triumphs of the new age of machine book production; and Dent's idealism was rewarded, if not by public honour, by the knowledge that rows of Everyman books were to be found in every middle-class British home. The sales to date represent the nearly incredible average of a million copies a year since the series began.

Not until 1935 were the Morris bindings, end-papers and title-pages of Everyman books superseded by brighter, washable cloths, contemporary end-papers designed by Eric Ravilious, and typographic title-pages. The text pages of the books did not need bringing up to date.

So far we have been describing the use made of the new ideas on book design by publishers. One of the first men to put them into practice as a printer was Bernard Newdigate (1869–1944).[2] He entered his father's small printing business, The Art and Book Company, at Leamington in 1890, at the age of 21; about 1904 he was introduced to Emery Walker, and found what he had been looking for. In a year, printed results 'provided noble proof that Bernard Newdigate had sprung an almost fully-equipped typographer from the head of Emery Walker'.[3] Newdigate's firm, which became the Arden Press in 1904, remained minute and barely solvent; but it did better printing than many of the great printing factories in England. When it was bought in 1908 by W. H. Smith and Son, and transferred to Letchworth, Newdigate remained as typographical adviser; but he could not be happy in the working conditions of big business. In 1914, aged 45, he volunteered for military service and spent four years in the army. In 1920 he met Basil Blackwell, then a young publisher of vision

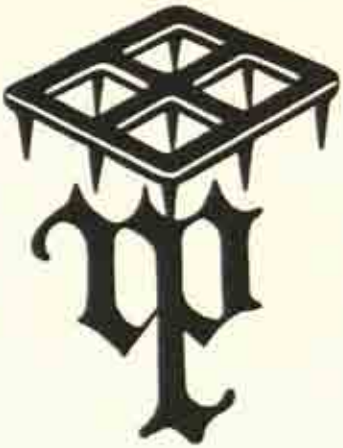
[1] Both have since been reprinted, vindicating Dent's courage.
[2] See Joseph Thorp, *B. H. Newdigate, Scholar-Printer*, Blackwell, 1950.
[3] Basil Blackwell: 'Bernard Newdigate, Typographer'; *Printing Review*, No. 41, London, 1946.

who saw in Newdigate the man to help him put some of those visions into practice; and a fruitful association began which will be described in a later chapter.

Another of those in the next generation after Morris who carried forward the revival of printing was Joseph Thorp. He had been educated at Stonyhurst College with Newdigate. After nearly ten years' training as a Jesuit, he left the Church at the age of thirty and entered the office of The Art and Book Company in 1903, migrating soon into the printing side and there finding his métier. It was he who introduced Newdigate to Emery Walker. Thorp quickly saw how low the general standard of printing had sunk, and how comparatively easy it would be to produce something better. He went to London and became one of the first free-lance typographers and advisers on printing. In his own modest words, 'I can give perhaps no better single proof of the fact that all was not well with the trade, than that such a casual amateur and interloper as the present writer . . . should after a few months' hurried but enthusiastically intensive training under Bernard Newdigate and Frank Goeby . . . have come into Fleet Street and be promptly accepted as some sort of "authority".'[1]

Thorp was never a printer: i.e. he never owned or managed a printing firm. But he controlled and designed much printing and spent a large part of his life getting sound, revolutionary ideas about the design of printing and many other subjects accepted or occasionally rejected by various great and small concerns. A book, *Printing for Business*, which he wrote in 1919, remains a very good (and was then the only) layman's introduction to the so-called mystery, and had a wide influence. It was picked up in Jersey City, U.S.A., in 1922, by a girl who was dusting Henry Lewis Bullen's bookshelves in the office of the American Type Founders Company, and she was so fired by its enthusiasms and belief in the importance of the design of commercial printing (as opposed to that of limited editions) that she came over to England. She herself played a highly distinguished part in the same movement, first

[1] Joseph Thorp: 'A Significant Period of Our Printing'; *Printing Review*, No. 40, London, 1945.



The colophon of the Westminster Press, drawn by Eric Gill.

under the pen name of Paul Beaujon, as a writer on typography and, in particular, on the history of French type-faces, and then as Publicity Manager of the Monotype Corporation in London, under her own name of Mrs Beatrice Warde.

With Newdigate and Thorp must be linked the name of Gerard Meynell; they are the three leaders of the second generation of the revival of printing. Gerard Meynell was perhaps the first printer to raise the standard of design in jobbing printing. The nephew of Alice Meynell, he was managing director (and from 1900 co-owner) of the Westminster Press. The sign of the Westminster Press, a harrow, designed *c.* 1928 by Eric Gill, became famous for good work. In January 1913 Meynell launched *The Imprint*, a magazine devoted to 'improving and spreading technical knowledge' about printing; its contents are evidence of the scholarly basis and wide scope of the new interests in the graphic arts, and its edition (10,000) an indication of the extent of that interest. A special type was designed by J. H. Mason (who had been Morris's compositor) and Gerard Meynell. It was produced 'in an incredibly

short space of time'[1] by the Monotype Corporation, and called Imprint Old Face, Series 101.

It was the first new type for general book printing[2] to be produced in England since Phemister's Old Style of 1860, and, in accordance with *The Imprint's* principles, it was not reserved but put on sale to the public. It did not look impressively 'new', and to the layman did not look new at all. It was a development of the best features of Caslon and Plantin Old Faces to meet the requirements of modern printing conditions, and its excellence is proved by the fact that it is still today one of the normal roman faces in daily use for every kind of printing.

The last of the names to be mentioned here of those who founded the movement of revival in printing is the greatest of them all, Edward Johnston, the calligrapher (1872–1944). Calligraphy, or beautiful writing with a pen, is an end—or a beginning—in itself; it is also the foundation on which printing is built, and its most natural adornment. A revival of good lettering of every kind, whether written, carved, or howsoever shaped, was as badly needed in the world as a revival of printing, and was indeed an essential preliminary to it.

James Wardrop wrote of Edward Johnston: 'Better than anyone else, possibly since the days of Charlemagne, he understood, and learned to manipulate that infinitely complex, but universal and elementary thing we call the alphabet. . . . By his searching study of Classical inscriptions, of Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, Edward Johnston re-lived, in effect, the manual experience of a thousand years'.[3]

He rediscovered the simple but neglected truth that the instrument must be allowed to condition the shape and form of lettering; he made himself a master of the pen, and for this reason largely abstained from designing lettering to be formed by other tools, e.g. printers' types. His one important commercial commission was to design a sans serif alphabet for use by the London Trans-

[1] See the preface of *The Imprint*, January, 1913, No. 1.
[2] If Series 59, Veronese, is excepted. It was cut by Monotype in 1911 for Joseph Dent, but was more of a private press face.
[3] James Wardrop: Tributes to Edward Johnston, privately printed, 1948.

port Services. It is still in use today on nearly all London stations, platforms, trains and bus indicator-boards.

From 1899 he taught writing and lettering at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, and from 1901 at the Royal College of Art. In 1906 was published the first edition of *Writing, Illuminating and Lettering*, an illustrated textbook which has had the large, but not unmerited, claim made for it that it is actually the best handbook ever written for any craft. Among his pupils were Anna Simons, Eric Gill, Graily Hewitt, Percy Smith and Harold Curwen. To quote again from James Wardrop: 'Wherever letter forms are shown today, in books, in newspapers, on hoardings and on shop fronts, we owe it largely to Edward Johnston that in them there is little to offend and much to delight the eye'.[1] Edward Johnston was a great man, declared to have been a saint by those who knew him, a claim not contradicted by study of his face in the few photographs of him that survive. When a pupil said to him that he did not believe in perfection, Edward Johnston replied: 'I believe in the Book of Kells'.

[1] James Wardrop: article on Edward Johnston in *The Studio*, November, 1946.

Illustration by Rudolph Ruzicka
to Thoreau's *Walden*, 1930.

Chapter 7

The Nineteen-twenties in Britain

Morris and Cobden-Sanderson had re-established in the mind of the public the idea that printing could be an art; but they had used the methods and materials of the past. Emery Walker, Lethaby and others in the ensuing Arts and Crafts movement, based on Morris's teaching, insisted that the principles of good design—fitness for purpose, honesty in the use of materials and so on—could and must be applied to machine production.

In 1920 a world war was over and so was the experimental period of many new printing techniques, especially machine composition. The machine age had arrived: the right paths for graphic design to take (as also for every other branch of commercial design and for architecture) were waiting to be explored.

The Everyman and other series had shown what machine production could do to make good books cheap; they had also shown that a contemporary style for decoration had not yet been evolved. But Bernard Newdigate and Gerard Meynell in England, D. B. Updike and Bruce Rogers in America, and others in France, Germany and Italy were all, after 1910, working in a contemporary style, and more and more younger artists were being attracted to the field of book design.

It may with some justice be claimed that the general average of design in commercial book production was, from about 1923 onwards, higher in Great Britain than in any other country in Europe or America. But there were high peaks in the book production of America, of France, of Holland, of Germany, of Italy, even of Czechoslovakia and Russia, that surpassed ours; and without wasting time on comparisons, it must be admitted that each country had much to learn from, and to teach, the others.

Perhaps the most important of all the pioneer work in the nineteen-twenties was the typographical researches of Stanley Morison (b. 1889). They were published as essays in a great variety of publications, mostly in England, Germany and France. Many of them have never been accessible to the public and have never been collected and published in book form, partly because the author lost all his papers by fire during an air-raid on London in 1941; but the most important essays, for example those published in *The Fleuron* and *The Monotype Recorder*, must have been read and digested by every practising designer and printer interested in his trade.[1] Their great virtue, beside their wit, was that they looked forward as well as back, for the author was a typographer in industry, besides a scholar. From 1922 he was typographical adviser to the Monotype Corporation and from 1925 to the Cambridge University Press; later, he joined *The Times*, becoming responsible for its typography and for the Times New Roman type which appeared in 1932. In addition, from 1928 to 1938 he was a director of Victor Gollancz Limited, for whom he designed and introduced a brilliantly simple style for typography (Pl. 12a) and binding which made Gollancz books completely distinctive. The startling Gollancz jackets, using type only on yellow paper, were enormously successful—and cheap to produce. Morison's influence, direct or indirect, was also visible in many other parts of the world of book, newspaper and advertisement design.

Another great and influential work of scholarship was D. B. Updike's *Printing Types, their History, Forms and Use*, first published in 1922 in two volumes, printed by the author at his own Merrymount Press in Boston. The book was based on a series of lectures given in Harvard University from 1911 to 1916. Updike's aim is expressed in the first words of the introduction: 'The purpose of this book is to supply a basis for the intelligent appreciation of the best printing types through the study of their history, forms and use'. Updike has his prejudices, errors and omissions,

[1] A Handlist of Stanley Morison's writings up to 1949 was published privately by the Cambridge University Press in 1950, and a further handlist of his writings from 1950 to 1959 was published in *Motif* No. 3, 1959.

but the book is a brilliant, lightly-written yet comprehensive survey of the subject. It can be enjoyed purely for its style and general interest, but it remains also the best introduction to a serious study of type and book design.

One of Updike's blind spots was his prejudice against mechanical composition. Nowhere in *Printing Types* does he mention Linotype or Monotype, and the whole of this 580-odd page work was composed by hand.

It is necessary to appreciate the position of the Monotype and Linotype machines in the world of printing in the nineteen-twenties. Machine composition, at last practically perfected after long years of experiment, represented the biggest change of methods in book production since printing had been invented.

The Linotype casts each line in a solid bar. This meant that columns of type were very easy and quick to handle, which made it the better machine for newspapers: but the technical difficulty of casting overhanging letters like italic f could not be and still has not yet been overcome. Linotype composition, as opposed to Monotype, can always be identified from its italic, which has this drawback. The Monotype machine casts and composes single types which are exactly the same as hand-composed types. The first Monotype machine for sale in England arrived in 1899. It encountered great opposition both from the hand compositors, who thought their livelihood was threatened, and from the purists who saw, quite rightly, that it could not then compose a page of type as perfectly as a skilled hand compositor. In order to attain precision in casting, some standardization of letter widths had to be introduced, which at first resulted in slight but noticeable distortion of letter forms. To make one machine capable of first producing all the letters, signs and spaces, in all standard sizes, of any alphabet in the world, and then composing them together harmoniously, as perfectly as a skilled craftsman-compositor, was indeed a prodigious achievement which might well seem impossible; after all, there were few other things that machines could do actually better than hands, however cheaper and faster they might be.

But gradually the technical difficulties were overcome, and by

1918 or so it was possible to produce composition on the Monotype machine that was absolutely indistinguishable (except possibly that it was more even) from hand composition. The crowning achievement was the casting of letters like the italic f, already mentioned, which overhang other letters.

But if the Monotype operator could do anything, for example set type in circles, his facility might prove dangerous. Dangerous also was the facility of the Benton punch-cutting machine in producing new types. This was foreseen by the Monotype Corporation of London and with great wisdom they appointed Stanley Morison to devise a programme of sound type-faces and to oversee their production.

There was, in fact, at that time, a great need for new types for both publishing and jobbing printing. The introduction of many new kinds of printing machines and processes, of great rotary newspaper machines, photolitho-offset and gravure, of stereotyping and electrotyping, and the line and half-tone process block, all required it. So did the many new kinds of paper being introduced to suit the varied needs of book publishers, advertisers and general industry.

Most of the type-faces in existence in 1920 had been designed for the conditions of hand-printing, on dampened hand-made paper. It was time for the situation to be rationalized and, of course, exploited; for new type-faces appeal to typographers as much as new hats to their wives.

Under Mr Morison's direction, an ambitious programme of type production was undertaken by the Monotype Corporation. Every year saw important additions to the Monotype repertoire. Many of the best type-faces of the past were reproduced, such as Baskerville, Garamond, Plantin, Bembo, Bodoni, Walbaum and Bell. New designs were also cut, such as Centaur, designed by the American Bruce Rogers; Goudy, by the American Frederic Goudy; Perpetua, by Eric Gill; and perhaps most widely used of all type faces in the world today, Times New Roman, designed under Morison's own direction.[1]

[1] For some details of the production of these types, see S. Morison, *A Tally of Types*, Cambridge University Press (privately printed), 1953.

Since the Monotype machine is the only composing machine in the world which can cast movable types, and since these types, once cast, are interchangeable with any other printer's types, and since the types available are so good, the Lanston Monotype Corporation has attained a position of unique importance and influence throughout the book-printing trade of the world.

The Monotype Corporation rendered another and parallel contribution to the revival of good design in printing: it constantly put the highest ideals of typography before the world's printers and publishers by means of an enlightened publicity programme. The chief feature of this was *The Monotype Recorder*, a periodical in whose pages have appeared many important historical essays, as well as articles of instruction and general interest for Monotype users. Since 1926 it has been admirably edited by the American Mrs Beatrice Warde. A set of its back numbers is today much to be prized by any typographer or student of the history of printing, especially the series of Special Numbers devoted to individual type-faces. And since the issues were designed and printed by different printing firms, together they form a sort of panorama of printing in Britain during the period.

Although the Monotype machine has attained such predominance in England and Europe, where it is used for the vast majority of books, in America the Linotype machine easily leads the Monotype, perhaps owing to a superior sales and business organization, perhaps because the Linotype is quicker than Monotype and speed is an American obsession, or perhaps because American printers think movable type is an out-of-date idea—which indeed it is. The Linotype and Monotype companies in America and Britain are independent organizations, so that not all type-faces cut for the machines of one country are available in the other; but many, of course, are available in both.

The Mergenthaler Linotype Company's programme of type-faces included the cutting of Bodoni Book in 1916, Caslon Old Face in 1922, Cloister in 1926, and Baskerville in 1930. An important part in the Linotype Company's type programme was

I heard a confused noise about me, but in the posture I lay, could see nothing except the sky. In a little time I felt something alive moving on my left leg, which advancing gently forward over my breast, came almost up to my chin; when bending my eyes downwards as much as I could, I perceived it to be a human creature not six inches high, with a bow and *I heard a confused noise about me, but in the posture I lay, could see nothing except the sky. In a little time I felt something alive moving on my left leg, which advancing gently forward over my breast, came almost up to my chin; when bending my eyes downwards as much as I could, I perceived it to be a human creature not six inches high, with a bow and*

ELECTRA

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CALEDONIA

Two type-faces designed by W. A. Dwiggins for Linotype composition.

played by the English printer George W. Jones (1860–1942), who designed, or supervised the production of, the admirable faces known as Granjon (introduced in 1924, and one of the finest interpretations of Garamond ever made), Estienne (1926), Venezia, Georgian and Baskerville. George W. Jones was a fine craftsman, rather than an original artist, and proprietor of a much-esteemed printing firm 'At the Sign of the Dolphin'.

Other important new faces introduced by Linotype were Fairfield (designed by Ruzicka in 1939 and not yet available in Britain), Janson (1934), (a revival of a seventeenth-century type), and Electra (1935) and Caledonia (1938) both designed by W. A. Dwiggins.

The tools, therefore—the Monotype and Linotype composing machines, and type-faces of aesthetic value suitable for modern use—were available. In Britain the man who was first and most successful in their use was Francis Meynell. It was Meynell who brought private press ideals into general publishing in Britain and who did most to confound the theory, still held by many in the early twenties, that 'beautiful' printing could only be done by hand and not by machine.

Francis Meynell was born in 1891, the son of Wilfred, publisher and distinguished man of letters, and Alice Meynell, the poet; Gerard Meynell of the Westminster Press was his cousin. His first work in typography was for his father's firm of Burns and Oates; and from this period survive some books which prefigure, in no mean fashion, the artistry of the Master of Nonesuch. For example, there is G. K. Chesterton's *Poems* (1915), an octavo in red buckram, printed in Caslon at the Chiswick Press on a specially attractive mould-made paper, and containing several authentic Nonesuch touches about it.

Nineteen-fifteen is also the date of the first book actually printed by Meynell himself at the Romney Street Press installed in his dining-room. It was *Ten Poems by Alice Meynell*, set in Fell types obtained from the Oxford University Press, and printed in an edition of 50 copies. Each poem was rubricated in sanguine ink by Edward Johnston; Stanley Morison was one of the compositors.

Only one other book, *The Diary of Mary Cary*, was issued from Romney Street, and the venture was discontinued.

A more important concern was the Pelican Press, founded by Meynell during the war, which did pioneer work by introducing a flavour of sixteenth-century French and Italian typography into contemporary advertising settings and pamphlets. It produced few books, but these included an anthology of Vaughan and Marvell, and *Typography*, devised and largely written by Meynell himself, perhaps the most brilliant piece of typographer's advertising ever published, and even today an entertaining and useful introduction to the subject. During Meynell's absence, the Pelican Press output was designed by Stanley Morison, who also wrote for it an unsigned pamphlet *The Craft of Printing* (1921) which ranks No. 3 in Carter's check-list of Morison's writings; the essay reappears as the first part of *Typography*.

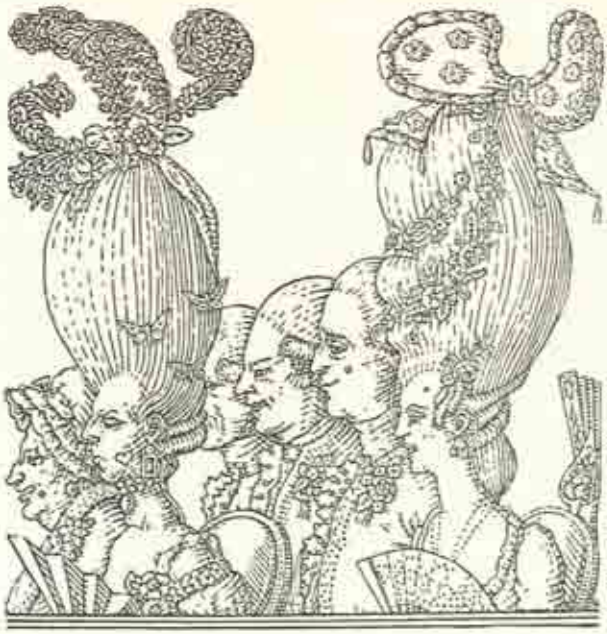
In 1923 Meynell founded the Nonesuch Press, with the aim of producing fine editions by modern methods, and actually for reading, not as ornaments. It was not a press in the accepted sense; it had some type, for experimental setting, and did even set one or two of its books, e.g. George Herbert's *The Temple*, but it did not print. Meynell's policy was to go anywhere for the type, paper or technique that suited the job in hand best, rather than be limited by his own equipment. The results gave to Britain a completely new idea of the part that book design may play in the enjoyment of literature.

But although it was the design of the Nonesuch books that was most publicized, that was only part of the Nonesuch success. Francis Meynell, himself a poet, designed books from the inside outwards, which is the right way; and the outsides were made right after the insides had been made right. That is to say, Meynell's genius for designing books was ancillary to his and his partners' (Vera Mendel's and David Garnett's) literary ability; and in fact their skill at publishing would have ensured success even without any interest in design at all. The Nonesuch books were not specimens of abstract design, like so many private press products, but were books that had a good reason for existing. They were

generally books of which no edition was in print, or of which the existing editions were poor, or which had not been published. As much care was given to editing as to production. Most Nonesuch books were published in artificially limited editions of a thousand or so copies; but some were published in unlimited editions and were successes that any publisher might have envied. Such were the Nonesuch *Week-End Book*, which became the favourite anthology of its period, and the Nonesuch Compendium editions of Shakespeare, Blake, Hazlitt, Coleridge, Swift, Walt Whitman, Donne and Morris, finely designed and printed and published originally at 8s. 6d. each. These last are good examples of the reticence advisable in the design of books for wide circulation. The typographical fireworks of some of the other Nonesuch books would have been out of place here. They feel just right; but their excellence is not easily noticeable until they are compared with other cheap editions. The skill and trouble necessary to achieve this rightness is not noticed at all.

No idea of the richness, imagination and variety of the Nonesuch output can be conveyed by words or photographs. The achievement can be appreciated only by handling and reading the books. An entertaining account of the first ten years and the first hundred books of the Press is contained in the *Nonesuch Century*.

Meanwhile, good work was also being done by others. The productions of the Shakespeare Head Press, for example, have nothing to lose by comparison with Nonesuch books. This press, a true printing firm, was founded in 1904 by the Shakespearean scholar A. H. Bullen to print a new edition of Shakespeare's works in Stratford-on-Avon, a project completed in 1907 in the house of Shakespeare's friend Julius Shaw. When Bullen died in 1920 the Press was bought by a small group which included the Oxford publisher Basil Blackwell and the printer Bernard Newdigate. If diversity was made a virtue by the Nonesuch Press, uniformity was a virtue of the Shakespeare Head; which does not mean that its books all looked alike, but that they nearly all looked of the same family. No set of books look handsomer on shelves than the Shakespeare Head editions of the eighteenth-century novelists,



Drawing by Thomas Lowinsky for *The School for Scandal*, Shakespeare Head Press, 1930.

and Jane Austen and Trollope, in their bright Sundour cloths stamped in gold. Nor are there any modern editions better to read. Besides these books for the armchair, magnificent editions of Froissart, Spenser, Chaucer, Plutarch, Malory, Milton and other great authors were printed for publication both by Basil Blackwell and the Press itself, and by other publishers such as the Cresset Press and the Limited Editions Club. The Press was moved from Stratford to Oxford in 1929. Only hand composition was undertaken on the premises at Oxford, but full use of Monotype was made by having books set outside whenever necessary.

Caslon was, perhaps, Newdigate's favourite, or, at least, his 'normal' type, and he used it magnificently; but he also, at one time or another, made equally good use of Garamond, Plantin, Poliphilus, Cloister and Centaur (which are all Old Faces). He

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avoided Baskerville and never used Bodoni or any other 'modern', which he considered ugly.

Among the artists used by the Shakespeare Head Press were Paul Woodroffe, who engraved various title-page devices in wood (and the wood-cut borders for the *Thomas à Kempis* designed by Newdigate for Burns and Oates); Thomas Lowinsky, who decorated *Plutarche's Lives* and *The School for Scandal* for the Press, *The Princess of Babylon* for the Nonesuch Press, *Paradise Regain'd* for *The Fleuron* and was the most decorative line-block illustrator of his day; Thomas Derrick, who engraved eight illustrations for Ambrose Bierce's *Battle Sketches*; and John Farleigh, who engraved illustrations for *Pindar's Odes of Victory*.

Newdigate was in the high tradition of scholar-printers and himself edited the Shakespeare Head edition of the poems of Ben Jonson and in part those of Michael Drayton. His crowning typographical achievement was the design of the one-volume edition of Shakespeare which Basil Blackwell published in 1935 at the amazingly low price of six shillings—a price made possible by the publisher's courage in printing 50,000 copies.

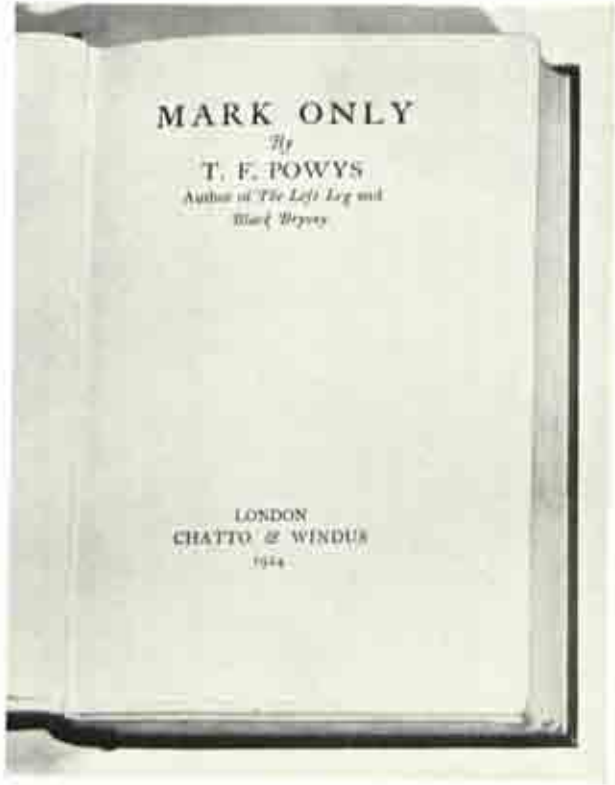
Newdigate died in 1944. In his Book-production Notes contributed monthly to *The London Mercury* for seventeen years, in the three special numbers of *The Studio* on the Art of the Book that he edited in 1914, 1928 and 1938, and above all in the books he printed, he made one of the greatest contributions to the raising of book-production standards in his time. As a friend and employer he was overwhelmingly kind and modest; as a man, saintly.

The third firm that became famous during this period was the Curwen Press. From its foundation in 1863 to 1917 it was a small press of no distinction devoted to the printing of music. In 1917 Harold Curwen (1885–1949), a grandson of the original founder, took over control and immediately began to do new things. He had been a pupil of Edward Johnston's at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. He now taught himself typography by resolving to use no other type than Caslon for two years on the theory that to know how to use one face well is the beginning of typographical knowledge: a self-discipline more than ever useful today when typo-

MORS ET VICTORIA

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK AND BOMBAY

7. *Mors et Victoria*, 1903. 8" × 5¼". The drawing is printed in red. D. B. Updike at the Merrymount Press, Boston.



MARK ONLY

By

T. F. POWYS

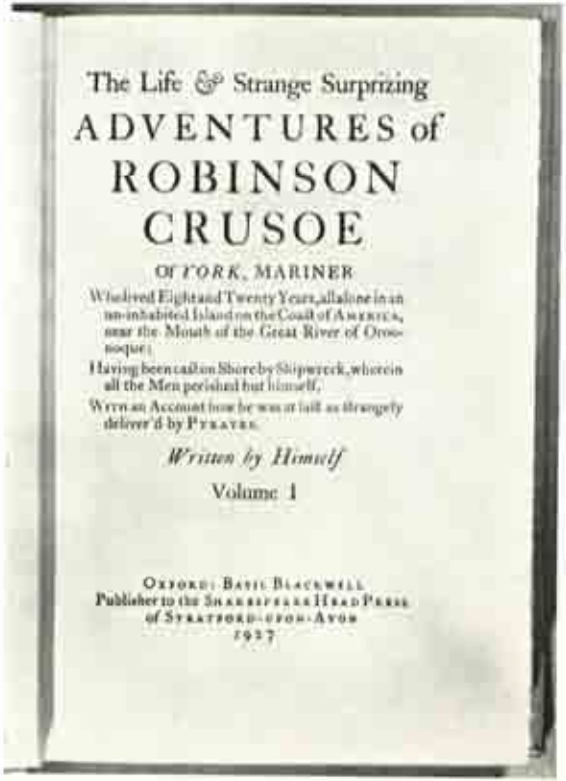
Author of *The Left Leg* and *Black Bryony*

LONDON

CHATTO & WINDUS

1924

8a. *Mark Only*, 1924. $7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5''$. The Chatto & Windus style: designed in Caslon by Charles Prentice.



The Life & Strange Surprizing

ADVENTURES of

ROBINSON

CRUSOE

OF *YORK*, MARINER

Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of AMERICA, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoque;

Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself.

With an Account how he was at last as strangely delivered by PYRATES.

Written by Himself

Volume 1

OXFORD: BASIL BLACKWELL

Publisher to the SHAKESPEARE HEAD PRESS

of STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

1927

8b. *Robinson Crusoe*, 1927. $7\frac{1}{8}'' \times 5''$. Designed in Caslon by B. H. Newdigate. Shakespeare Head Press.

Drawing by Albert Rutherston for Curwen Press
c. 1930.

graphers are surrounded by a far more bewildering number of faces than Curwen was. The art of typography is more dependent on how type is used than on what type is used. Curwen was a craftsman: he would let nothing go out that was not perfect: if the desired effect could not be obtained in the number of printings on the estimate, then additional printings were added until the result was correct, regardless of profit and loss. He trained his workmen and introduced men like Bernard Newdigate and Joseph Thorp (who was for a period typographic consultant to the Press) to talk to them until a new spirit animated the whole firm.

The early days of Curwen Press printing are deeply associated with the work of Lovat Fraser and Albert Rutherston. For an all-too-brief period Lovat Fraser's gay drawings, simple but brilliantly decorative, blossomed out to decorate advertisements of comptometer machines and Samuel Fripp's Olive Oils, as well as an incomparable series of poetry broadsides and small poetry books published by the Poetry Bookshop.

Rutherston's style was far more sophisticated and artificial, but equally charming. Both drew in black line and tinted their drawings with a paint brush, co-operating with Harold Curwen for

economical reproduction by line block. Never before or since have printed pages so successfully captured the translucent brightness of water colours and drawing inks.

Characteristic of the period also were the patterned papers that Lovat Fraser and Rutherston designed for the Curwen Press. They took their inspiration from the beautiful old and new Italian patterned papers, but achieved an originality and freshness of their own. They were used to cover printed books, or cardboard boxes, or were kept as flat sheets just to look at. Many others have since made notable contributions in this pleasant field, but Lovat Fraser's and Rutherston's were the earliest and perhaps for that reason the best loved.

Under Harold Curwen the Curwen Press's chief work was in 'jobbing'. In Holbrook Jackson's words: 'Harold Curwen abolished class distinctions between the printing of books and miscellaneous printing . . . leaflets and booklets, invitation and menu cards, folders and stationery, and other press settings developed style and charm. It was as though a company of drabs had been transferred from squalor to opulence'.[1]

In 1920, Harold Curwen took on a young man called Oliver Simon (1895–1956), the nephew of Albert Rutherston and William Rothenstein. Oliver Simon tells in his autobiography how, after being demobilized from the Army in 1919, he was looking for work in London, without knowing what he wanted to do, when, in Piccadilly, "an astonishing window display of sumptuous, dazzling, richly decorated books caught my eye. . . . I felt compelled to enter . . . and was told, for the first time in my life, about William Morris and the Kelmscott Press, and of the Kelmscott *Chaucer* in particular, which held a place of honour in the window. As I left, I knew . . . that I *must* become a printer.'[2] It was not easy for him to find a way into printing, and but for his uncles' help he might not have managed it. His autobiography tells of three curious and valuable months at the Chiswick Press under Charles Jacobi, from which he was then dismissed (not by Jacobi); then Harold Curwen

[1] Holbrook Jackson, *The Printing of Books*, 1938.
[2] Oliver Simon, *Printer and Playground*, 1956.

accepted him as a trainee. In 1921 Simon persuaded Curwen to add book-printing to the scope of the Curwen Press, if he (Simon) could obtain the orders: in which he was quickly successful. He also disclosed a flair for book design which, coupled with a flow of superbly designed publicity material, in a few years made the Curwen Press internationally famous. Harold Curwen's style in printing was plain (no rules or fleurons): but under Simon's direction the Curwen Press became a synonym for the exquisite use of printer's flowers and borders. A glance at the work of Poeschel and E. R. Weiss in Germany will show the source of Simon's inspiration; but, in typography, all good work is based on what has been done before. Simon pursued a wise policy of buying types and beautiful printing papers from the Continent to offer to his clients for special jobs, which were quite unobtainable anywhere else in this country. He also commissioned initial letters, typographic borders and patterned papers which were exclusive to the Curwen Press, from such artists as Percy Smith, Edward Bawden, Paul Nash, Eric Ravilious, and Jan van Krimpen.

Two ideas of his in the early twenties did much to spur on the revival of printing.

The first was *The Fleuron*, a 'journal' (in fact, a series of sumptuously-produced volumes) devoted to typography. Seven numbers were issued between 1923 and 1930. The first four were edited by Oliver Simon and printed by the Curwen Press; the last three by Stanley Morison and printed by the Cambridge University Press. No. 7 contained the editor's classic essay on *The First Principles of Typography*. All seven volumes remain an inspiration and treasure-house for those who practise or enjoy fine printing today.

The second idea was the Double Crown Club, a dining club founded in 1924. An excellent short account of it will be found in Holbrook Jackson's *The Printing of Books*. Its chief function has been to provide congenial opportunities for the reading of not-too-learned papers and talking typographical shop. It was an important institution during its early days, and to Oliver Simon is due the credit for its inception and wide influence.

A large number of private presses continued to operate all through the twenties and thirties. Of these the Ashendene (mentioned above), the Golden Cockerel and the Gregynog were the best. They produced some noble volumes but they did not contribute much that was new to the art of printing. They were surprisingly unadventurous in making experiments with type, illustrations, paper or binding—perhaps because designers with real originality could sell their talents more profitably elsewhere.

The Golden Cockerel Press did provide John Nash, Robert Gibbings and Eric Gill with opportunities for wood-engraving. In these and other books Eric Gill (1882–1940) made a notable contribution to the art of the book. Perhaps his engravings best known to the public were those executed for the pocket volumes of Dent's *New Temple Shakespeare*. But his figures are usually drawn in a stiff and formal style, like puppets, with too much idiosyncrasy to satisfy as illustrations. His calligraphy and engraving of letter forms were, however, of supreme mastery. In whatever medium, whether stone, wood or metal, they are a joy to study. In the more disciplined field of type design he also achieved success. Of his eleven type-faces, the Gill Sans Serif, published by the Monotype Corporation in 1927, soon became the most widely-used display face of the period. Gill is reported to have said of it: 'how much better it would be if it had serifs'. For book printing, his best designs were the Golden Cockerel type, Perpetua, Joanna and Bunyan. Perpetua, cut in many sizes by Monotype between 1925 and 1930, has been widely used. In a good book face no individual letter should call attention to itself, yet in Perpetua every letter seems to call attention to itself for its beauty. It is best used either for display, in the larger sizes where the beauty of individual letters may attract without impropriety, or in the small sizes, 5½ and 6 point, where it has no equal for clarity and fineness. The Joanna and Bunyan are better book faces, and Bunyan was recut by the Linotype Corporation in 1952 and is available for Linotype composition under the name of 'Pilgrim'. Joanna was used for Eric Gill's stimulating and beautifully designed small book of essays, *Typography* (1931) and remained a proprietary type of

AFTER this, it was noised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-truth was taken with a Summons, by the same Post as the other, and had this for a Token that the Summons was true, That his Pitcher was broken at the Fountain. When he understood it, he called for his Friends, and told them of it. Then said he, I am going to my Fathers, and tho' with great Difficulty I am
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'Pilgrim', a Linotype face based on a design by Eric Gill, in 12 point roman and italic.

Una dies media est, et fiunt sacra Minerva, nomina quae iunctis quinque diebus habent, Sanguine

Una dies media est, et fiunt sacra Minerva, nomina quae iunctis quinque diebus habent, Sanguine

Una dies media est, et fiunt sacra Minerva, nomina quae iunctis quinque diebus habent, Sanguine

'Minerva', a Linotype face designed by Reynolds Stone, in the 18 point sizes of roman, italic and bold.

Gill's own printing firm, Hague and Gill, at High Wycombe. Some connoisseurs consider it the best of all Gill's type designs.[1]

As a postscript to this chapter, to indicate the market for finely-produced modern books which existed in the middle of the between-the-wars period in Britain, three items from a bookseller's catalogue for 1930 are here quoted. All are books printed at the Shakespeare Head Press, Oxford.

> *Bede's History of the Church of England*, 1930.
> A copy of Vellum and bound in quarter pig-skin and oak boards cut from a 17th Century beam formerly in the roof of Brasenose College, Oxford.
> 200 dollars.

> *Froissart's Cronycles*, 1927–8.
> In eight volumes, with over six hundred armorial bearings coloured by hand, one of three sets printed on Japon vellum, with silk ties, contained in leather book-shaped cases.
> 900 dollars.

> *Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained*, Cresset Press, 1930.
> Illustrated with 20 wood engravings by D. Galanis. Decorated with initial letters especially designed by Anna Simons, printed in 24 point Cloister at the Shakespeare Head Press. Limited to 195 copies on Batchelor's Hand-made paper, price 20 guineas, and 10 copies on Roman Vellum, price 200 guineas.

[1] See Robert Harling 'The Type Designs of Eric Gill', *Alphabet and Image* 6, 1948.

Drawing by Lovat Fraser for Curwen Press, *c.* 1920.

Chapter 8

The Nineteen-twenties in Europe and U.S.A.

From time to time, if there is to be any progress in anything, a revolutionary approach is required to challenge all accepted ideas, and try out completely new ones. This was particularly necessary at the end of the nineteenth century, when, in Europe and America, the material aspect of the world had been so completely altered by industrial invention.

Then the world war shattered, among other things, the nineteenth-century belief in the moral virtues of material progress. After the war it was in Germany, the defeated country, that people were most receptive to revolutionary thought about art and design; and its focus was at the Bauhaus, which began when Walter Gropius became head of the Weimar Art School in 1919 and moved to Dessau in 1925. Here the experimental work of the photographers Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy had an immense influence in every field of commercial art: and wild experiments were also made in typography. There was an idea, held strongly for many years, that sans serif type was the true type of the twentieth century, because it was stripped of all excrescences and therefore functional, like tubular steel furniture and bare concrete houses. Visually, it certainly appeared so; but it was a fallacious argument. Sans serif type was invented about 1816, being shorn of its serifs to make it eye-catching and odd, and therefore suitable for advertising. One of its first names, still used today by printers, was Grotesque, shortened to 'Grot'. It is a most useful letter: the lack of serifs makes it easy to draw, paint, scratch on glass, carve in wood, or cast in metal and other materials: as type, it will stand

up well to stereotyping or indifferent reproduction by photogravure or photolitho. But serifs are not just frills to make letters look pretty. In roman lower-case (in which this book is set) the serifs help to tie the letters into words and they also help to differentiate certain rather similar letters, which without serifs are much harder to tell apart: a sans serif capital 'I' and lower-case 'l', for example, may be actually identical. Serifs have a definite function in helping legibility.

Experiments were also made with 'expressionist' and 'abstract' typography. Whatever else they were, they were not typography, but could be enjoyed with surrealist fur tea-cups and lectures at which electric bells rang continuously.

The idea of 'functional' or asymmetrical typography was, however, different, and of value. The chief exponent of this was Jan Tschichold (b. 1902), who from 1927 to 1933 was lecturer in typography at the Munich School for Master Printers. He published two important books explaining and demonstrating his theories, *Die neue Typographie* (Berlin, 1928) and *Typographische Gestaltung* (Basle, 1935); their appearance and layout is still exciting and has not dated, for they were based on sound principles and designed by a great typographer. But asymmetry is no more 'functional' than symmetry: it is merely another way of designing, which may or may not be suitable on any given occasion. It also requires great skill to do, as can be seen if Tschichold's work in this style is compared with that of his imitators, who all too often just push all headings over to the left and omit to use capitals, although this fad is now rare.

Tschichold, in any case, renounced his dogma that modern typography must be asymmetrical; in 1948 he came to Britain and for three years revitalized the typography and design of Penguin Books on completely traditional lines.

To return to the nineteen-twenties. While daring experiments were being carried out by German architects, sculptors, painters and photographers—soon to be branded as 'decadent' by Hitler—the traditional teaching of Edward Johnston had also taken deep root in Germany. This was due chiefly to Johnston's German pupil

Die Chorwerke des Tondichters Franz Schubert

Above, Claudius, designed by Rudolf Koch, and, *below*, two decorations designed by Willi Harwerth, for the Klingspor Foundry.

Anna Simons; and for many years it is probable that Johnston and, later, Eric Gill, had more fervent admirers in Germany than in England.

More purely German sources of inspiration were to be seen in the work of the deeply religious Rudolf Koch[1] (1876–1934). Born in Nuremberg, the son of a sculptor who died young, Koch was first apprenticed as a metal-chaser, but then decided to train at Munich as an art-teacher. Being prevented by officialdom from qualifying, he joined a Leipzig firm of lithographic printers who sent him to London to design almanacs for Raphael Tuck and Sons, their principal clients. This visit was not successful but soon afterwards he got nearer to his true métier when he discovered, by accident, that art could be applied to books, and began designing jackets and title-pages for publishers. Eventually, in 1906, he joined the Klingspor type-foundry at Offenbach-am-Main, where he remained till his death, interrupted only by war service as a private in the 1914–18 war, which profoundly influenced him. For the Klingspor Foundry he designed a series of type-faces, all based on written hands and rooted in the rich heritage of German penmanship and engraving. Rudolf Koch was, perhaps, as great a teacher as Edward Johnston and a more versatile and prolific inventor of alphabets: a great artist by any standards. His type-faces include Fette Deutsche Schrift (1910), Maxmilian and Maxmilian-Antiqua (1914), Koch Antiqua (1922), Neuland (1923) (a chunky alphabet of sans serif capitals reminiscent of the sculpture of Barlach, which was much used in English advertising), Jessen (1924–30), (used for his Bible, perhaps his greatest achievement in book design, and one of the most modest and satisfying solutions of the problem of bible design in this century), Claudius (1931–7), a most beautiful, almost gay, black-letter, Prisma (1928–1931), and Holla (1932). Koch wrote and designed two charming small books on lettering, *Das ABC Buchlein* (1934), and *Das Schreibbüchlein* (3rd edition 1936), and made silhouettes, tapestries and lettering for many other purposes. Several of Koch's pupils,

[1] See articles in *The Fleuron*, Nos. 6 and 5; *Rudolf Koch, ein deutscher Schreibmeister*, by W. H. Lange, Berlin (n.d.); and *Philobiblon*, special number on R. Koch, Vienna, 1934.

Die Geschichte von Aucassin und Nicolette

IM INSEL-VERLAG

Title-page of the Insel-Verlag *Aucassin & Nicolette*, 1954, with wood-engraving by Fritz Kredel.

driven from Germany for political reasons, have notably enriched graphic art in Britain and America. They include Berthold Wolpe, designer of the Albertus, Hyperion and Pegasus types, who has worked in Britain since 1935; and Fritz Kredel, the wood-engraver, now one of America's best book illustrators. Warren Chappell, designer of Lydian and Trajanus types, one of America's leading calligraphers and typographers, was also a pupil of Koch's for two years.

Germany's outstanding book printer for the first quarter of the century, and longer, was Carl Ernst Poeschel (1874–1944), head of the Leipzig firm of Poeschel and Trepte.[1] He designed and printed some of the earliest of the famous Insel-Verlag Series, forerunners in size and typographical excellence of Penguins and the direct model for the King Penguin Series. Poeschel had visited England and been inspired by Morris, Walker and Cobden-Sanderson; and his work before 1941, traditional and European in style, rather than German, was in turn an inspiration to the younger British book designers who made their names after 1918.

The remarkable German school of type designers, of whom Koch was only one, if the greatest, owed much to Karl Klingspor (1868–1950), for it was he who encouraged and guided them to their greatest achievements. Having been trained for the tobacco trade, he and his brother took over the Rudhard Foundry at Offenbach in 1892 and changed its name to Klingspor in 1906. Apart from Karl Klingspor's direct encouragement and inspiration of his designers, he gave unique opportunities for them to show their types to the best advantage in a lavish flow of beautifully produced publications, including both privately printed books and superb specimen sheets and booklets.

The first three artists associated with the Klingspor Foundry were Otto Eckmann (1865–1902), Peter Behrens (1868–1940), architect as well as type designer, and Otto Hupp (1859–1949), designer of heraldry as well as types. Of greater importance to

[1] See 'C. E. Poeschel' by H. Schmollet, *Signature* (New Series) No. 11, 1950, and the article on German Book-printing in *The Fleuron*, No. 4.

book design today were E. R. Weiss (1875–1943), Walter Tiemann (1876–1951), F. H. Ehmcke (b. 1878) and F. H. Ernst Schneidler (1882–1956).

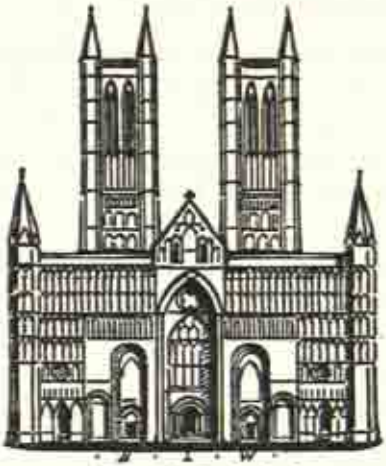
Weiss, like several German type designers, was first and foremost a painter, and remained one. He was also a poet and scholar who translated the *Odyssey*. He designed various fine black-letter founts and some roman types, including two sets of initials in 1928 which are of great dignity and beauty and have been much used in England.

Tiemann was also a painter, and there is a femininity and lightness of touch in his work (particularly as an illustrator and book designer) which is uncommon in Germany. In 1907, with C. E. Poeschel, he founded the Janus Press, Germany's first private press at Leipzig, inspired by the Doves Press in England, and which issued five books. Two of his very successful black-letter types were Kleist-Fraktur (1928) and Fichte-Fraktur (1935). He also designed some fine roman types, including Orpheus (1928) and Euphorion (1935).

F. H. Ehmcke's types were among the best and most widely used in Germany in the first part of the century, and included the Ehmcke-Fraktur (1912). In 1914 he founded the Rupprecht Press, all of whose books were hand-printed in types of his own design; and wrote several books on the history of lettering and type design.

Schneidler became a great teacher at the Stuttgart School of Art and an experimenter in book and type design. His Legende (Bauer Foundry, 1937) is one of the most striking and original calligraphic achievements of the half-century. It goes back for inspiration to the Civilité types of the sixteenth century although it is entirely modern. It is not a type that can be used often and for many purposes but it has conferred distinction on much advertising and magazine design in Europe and America.

Another designer of successful German types was F. W. Kleukens (1880–1956) who founded the Ernst-Ludwig Press in 1907 at Darmstadt and also worked for the Insel-Verlag. Apart from three useful black-letter faces designed before 1912, he



Lincoln Cathedral

Corvinus Press

British Museum

H.M. Stationery Office

St Bride Printing Library

Five symbols designed by Berthold Wolpe.

designed Ratio, produced by the Stempel Foundry in 1924, a 'modern' roman which has had a good deal of use in England.

The influence of English designers was strong in Germany up to 1914. When the Insel-Verlag launched a series of German classics called the *Grossherzog Wilhelm Ernst Ausgabe* in 1905, the format was designed by Emery Walker, and the books had calligraphic half-titles and title-pages drawn by Edward Johnston and Eric Gill. Count Harry Kessler, a diplomat with an English mother, had been responsible for finding this English talent. In 1913 he founded the Cranach Press at Weimar, a private press for which Eric Gill, Johnston and others designed letters and types. The Cranach Press, which terminated at its founder's death in 1937, was of a cosmopolitan nature and used a great variety of types, formats and papers. Kessler's press-man at one time was Gage Cole, who had been a press-man at the Doves Press. Among its most notable productions were a magnificent *Hamlet* (1929) with wood-engravings by Gordon Craig, and Virgil's *Eclogues* (1926), in which the initials, by Eric Gill, were decorated by Aristide Maillol with painted figures which Gill then engraved.

Perhaps the most important and serious of all the German private presses was the Bremer Press (1911–1934) founded by Willy Wiegand at Bremen. All its books were printed in roman types designed by Wiegand and nearly all its books were decorated with initial letters drawn by Anna Simons (Edward Johnston's pupil) and cut on wood. One of the Press's publications was a portfolio of 20 sheets exhibiting all these alphabets (1926). Two other notable Bremer Press books were St Augustine's *de Civitate Dei* (1925) and Homer's *Odysee* (1926).

Another outstanding German type designer was Paul Renner (1878–1956), designer of Futura, a sans serif cut in 14 variations between 1924 and 1950, and Renner-Antiqua. Renner was also a painter, but spent much of his life in teaching typography, and wrote several books, of which the most important was *Die Kunst der Typographie*, a noteworthy attempt to provide a manual of contemporary typographic practice (2nd edition, Berlin 1948).

By the middle twenties, 'German work in the field of book

production in all its departments of typography and presswork, or in binding and end-papers, etc., possesses a greater vitality than that of any other country,' wrote Stanley Morison[1] in 1927, and it is a judgement with which we do not quarrel today.

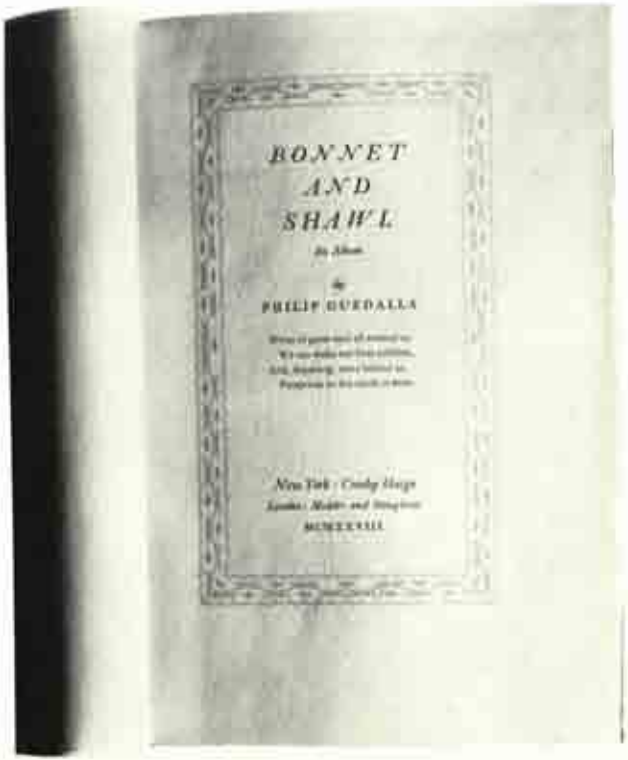
Holland has always played an important, and sometimes a leading, part in European printing, besides having its own claim to be the country where printing was invented. The names of Elsevier and Enschedé, Van Dijck and Voskens, need only to be mentioned to recall the greatness of this small country. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most of the best types in Europe were made in Holland. Then, during the nineteenth century, the quality of design sank as abysmally there as everywhere else. But the strong similarity and affinity that exists between the English and the Dutch made it certain that the ideas of William Morris, Emery Walker, Cobden-Sanderson and Johnston would be very quickly accepted by them, and so it happened.

The renaissance of printing in Holland[2] is chiefly associated with the names of S. H. de Roos, J. F. Van Royen, Charles Nypels, A. A. M. Stols and Jan Van Krimpen, the printing firm of Enschedé at Haarlem, and the Amsterdam Type Foundry.

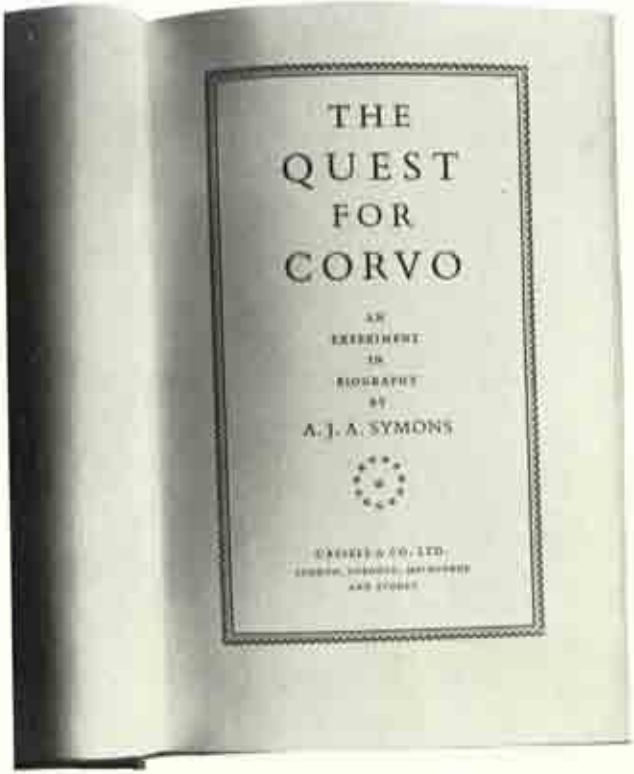
S. H. de Roos (b. 1877) was the first designer to show the way. In 1903 he designed a volume of essays by William Morris, translated into Dutch, in the Grasset type, which was in complete contrast to the 'free style' or 'Art nouveau' welter of whirls and curls then in vogue. In 1912 his first type-face was cut by the Amsterdam Type Foundry, the Hollandsche Mediaeval, followed in the next few years by his Erasmus Mediaeval, Grotius, Zilver and Meidoorn Types. These were all romans: black-letter had ceased to be an acceptable alternative for reading matter. De Roos's early types have curls and idiosyncrasies which make them look dated today, but when first produced they were of wholesome influence. His Egmont (Intertype, 1933) is an elegant roman with calligraphic

[1] *A Review of Recent Typography*, etc., S. Morison, London, 1927.

[2] See C. L. Van Halsbeke, *L'Art Typographique dans les Pays-Bas depuis 1892*, Maestricht 1929; J. G. Dreyfus, *The Work of J. Van Krimpen*, Haarlem, 1952; A. M. Hammacher, *J. F. Van Royen*, The Hague; *In Memoriam Charles Nypels*, Amsterdam, 1953; G. W. Ovink, *De Letters van S. H. de Roos*, Amsterdam, n.d.; and articles in *The Fleuron* No. 7 and *Modern Book Production*, London, 1928.



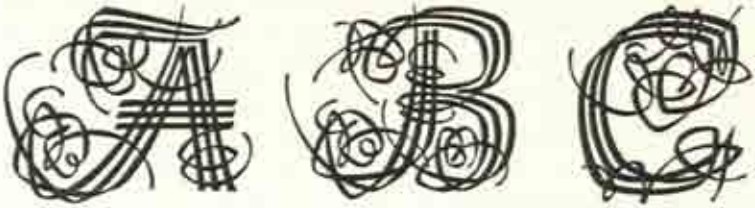
9a. *Bonnet and Shawl*, 1928. $8\frac{5}{8}'' \times 5\frac{1}{2}''$. Designed in Baskerville by Frederic Warde. The border is printed in pale olive green. W. E. Rudge.



9b. *The Quest for Corvo*, 1934. $8\frac{5}{8}'' \times 5\frac{1}{2}''$. Designed in Bembo by Oliver Simon for Cassell. Curwen Press.

10a. U.S. binding designs. l. to r., W. E. Rudge, 1927, D. B. Updike, 1929, Bruce Rogers, 1911, D. B. Updike, 1903, D. B. Updike, 1913, W. E. Rudge & Frederic Warde, 1928, D. B. Updike, 1904.

10b. *Franklin Evans*, 1929. $7\frac{3}{4}'' \times 4\frac{3}{4}''$. D. B. Updike at the Merrymount Press, Boston.



Raffia, designed by Henk Krijger for Typefoundry Amsterdam.

ABCD
NOPQRS

Followed the

You should live twice, in it

De Roos Inline, roman and italic, designed by S. H. de Roos for Typefoundry Amsterdam.

characteristics, which has had considerable use in England and America as well as on the Continent. It is available in several weights and in 'Inline' initials. His Libra (1938) is a sort of uncial letter and is cut in two weights, in text and display sizes: like the French Peignot, there is only one alphabet, but the letters are clearly from the hand of a master-calligrapher, and invite use when the appropriate occasion can be found. His last and most successful type design is De Roos Roman and Italic, first made available in 1951, and a brilliantly original version of the classic theme. As usual in De Roos's work it is strongly calligraphic, obviously pen-made, and is equally convincing in the italic and bold cuttings: it should have as big a success as Perpetua. It is, at the moment, available for machine composition on the Intertype in sizes up to 12 pt., in American and Continental depths only.

De Roos was also an active typographer and in 1927 established his own private press, the 'Heuvel Pers'; but it has been as typographer and chief designer for the Amsterdam Type Foundry from 1907 to 1942 that he has exerted most influence on book design.

J. F. Van Royen (1878–1942), a high official in the Dutch Post Office, played his part as book-lover and publisher. De Zilverdistel (The Silver Thistle) was first of all a publishing association of poets, who had their books printed by Enschedé: it was then joined by Van Royen, who transferred it to The Hague and ran it as a private press. He used types designed by De Roos and Lucien Pissarro. In 1923 Van Royen changed the name of the Press to 'Kunera'. Van Royen's books had ample margins, clear and simple layout, and calligraphic initials. In his official capacity as General Secretary of the Post Office, he was able to give the young Van Krimpen his first important commission, which was to design lettering for Dutch postage stamps in 1923. Van Royen died in a German concentration camp.

Charles Nypels (1895–1952) was a pupil of De Roos, who became a typographer and publisher of limited editions. He was a man of wide culture, deeply read in English and particularly French literature, especially poetry, as well as the literature of his own country. He designed books for La Connaissance in Paris and

the First Edition Club in London, as well as for various Dutch publishers. Examples of his work are well shown in *In Memoriam Charles Nypels*, designed by De Roos and published by his friends in Amsterdam in 1953.

A. A. M. Stols (b. 1900) started publishing at Maestricht in 1922 and in a few years became the most important publisher of finely printed editions and art books in the Netherlands. Since the war he has been working in South America.

It was Jan Van Krimpen (1892–1958) who gave Holland again a name of international pre-eminence. Educated at the Academy of Art at The Hague, and with a deep interest in poetry and literature, he was influenced towards lettering and typography by Johnston's book on lettering and early issues of the English printing magazine *The Imprint*. After working as a free-lance letterer and designer for some years, he began his own private press in 1920, with the imprint Palladium, and used, it is interesting to note, Caslon as his type-face, as being the best then available. In 1923, as a result of the opportunity to design the lettering for stamps mentioned above, he was commissioned by Messrs Enschedé to design a type-face, which was first used for the official Dutch printing at the International Exhibition at Paris in 1925, and was hence called Lutetia (=Paris). It was deservedly awarded a *Grand Prix*; and Van Krimpen was invited to join the firm of Enschedé as consultant and Art Director. At the Enschedé works he became custodian of perhaps the world's richest collection of historic types and typographical material: in his article 'Typography in Holland' printed in *The Fleuron* No. 7 he paid tribute to the work of Dr Charles Enschedé, who between about 1880 and his death in 1919 had laboured to turn the great collection from 'a state of almost complete confusion' into order.

Van Krimpen at Enschedé soon established himself as one of the very few great designers of type and lettering in the world. His types include Romanee (1928), Romulus (a most interesting type family which includes a bold, a condensed bold, a sans serif in four weights, a Greek and the calligraphic 'Cancelleresca Bastarda'), Spectrum (1941–3) and Sheldon (1947): the last two being

Ornata

Ornata, designed by O. H. W. Hadank for the Klingspor Foundry, Offenbach a. Main. The border round this page was also designed by Hadank

M R

A decorated initial letter designed by Jan van Krimpen for the exclusive use of The Curwen Press, London

VAN KRIMPEN OPEN

An open letter designed by Jan van Krimpen for the Enschedé Foundry, Haarlem

specially designed for Bibles, the former for a Utrecht publishing firm, the latter for the Oxford University Press.

He has also designed the most classically beautiful display letters of this century, for book-work: Lutetia Open, Open Roman caps (used for the Nonesuch Press editions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*), and an un-named alphabet for the Curwen Press which still has no rival in its own field.

As a typographer, Van Krimpen hardly ever introduced any typographical ornamentation—except for calligraphic crest or device centrally placed on a title-page—but relied on the fundamentals of simplicity, proportion and the sparing use of a second colour. The severity and purity of his work is an inspiration to the world, and has done much to raise the general level of graphic design in the Netherlands to its present impressive level. In particular, the Dutch school of calligraphers is very strong, and owes much to both Van Krimpen and De Roos.

The flood and surge of artistic movements in France at the turn of the century is too big a subject to be dealt with in a few words: but it is obvious that the typographic side of book design has not, in the present century, attracted as much talent and attention in France as it has in Germany, Britain and America; William Morris's influence was always less in the southern countries than in the northern. In general, the discipline of designing in harmony with type seems not to appeal to French designers, nor that of printing type carefully, to French printers.

New ideas about printing in the eighteen-nineties were introduced to France by the publisher Edouard Pelletan, who opened his shop in Paris in 1896. Some of his title-pages are shown in S. Morison's *The Art of the Printer*, recently republished. The Imprimerie Nationale, under the directorship of Arthur Christian, also produced work of a high technical standard and a certain nobility of appearance. At about the same time the great type-founding firm of Peignot (founded by Gustave Peignot, who died in 1899) was beginning to take a lead in French type design.

After the war, book illustration, if not book design, began to thrive in France in a way it has never done elsewhere. Whole

series of novels in paper-bound editions were illustrated with wood-engravings, while expensive collector's editions proliferated, often illustrated with etchings, engravings, aquatints and lithographs, with hand-stencilled colouring.

Nearly all the best French illustrators have worked in several mediums, and experimented with ingenious combinations of the various processes. J. E. Laboureur (1877–1943), for example, an illustrator chiefly in line, worked equally successfully on wood and metal. A. Alexeieff (b. 1901 in Russia) revivified the aquatint, besides making masterly lithographs and etchings, and exploited the rich textures and tones of these processes to produce macabre effects of unforgettable power, e.g., in Gogol's *Le Journal d'un Fou* (1927), and in *Les Frères Karamazov* (1929). Demetrius Galanis, born in 1882 in Athens but naturalized French, became the greatest etcher and engraver on metal of his day, besides engraving on wood and in colour. His chief work for an English publisher was twenty magnificent wood-engravings for the Cresset–Shakespeare Head *Paradise Lost and Paradise Regain'd*, 1930. Jean-Gabriel Daragnès (b. 1886), as well as being a notable etcher and wood-engraver, became perhaps the leading designer and printer of fine books in France during the first thirty years of the century. Two of his best-known productions are *Les Croix de bois*, illustrated by Dunoyer de Segonzac, and *L'Etoile matutine* with his own illustrations.

Bernard Naudin,[1] b. 1870, was exceptional among French illustrators in that he became interested in typography as well as illustration. He designed a well-known and successful type-face, Naudin (Debergny and Peignot, 1925) and a series of charming vignettes and ornaments to be used with it. The italic is a formalized version of his own handwriting: it is mannered, but soundly traditional, and has been widely and attractively used in French typography with a period flavour. Naudin served in the first world war and his *Croquis de Campagne* (1916) were among the best and most moving illustrations made of that time. His other chief works of illustration are Denis Diderot's *Le Neveu de*

[1] See 'Bernard Naudin, illustrator', by Luc Benoist, in *The Fleuron*, No. 6.

Wood-engraving by D. Galanis for *Paradise Lost*, Cresset Press, 1930.

Rameau (1924), *L'Ingenu* by Voltaire (1927), and *Le Grand Testament de François Villon.*

Fine work was also done by Charles Martin, Pierre Falké, Mariette Lydis, Marcel Vertès, and numerous others. It must not be forgotten also that occasional book illustrations, often magnificent, were made by many artists who were never book-artists, for example Picasso, Dufy, Matisse and Maillol; the latter especially made remarkable wood-engravings for the *Eclogues, Daphnis et Chloe* and *L'Art d'aimer.* (See also page 107 below).

The leading publisher of carefully designed and illustrated books at this period was Léon Pichon, who preferred wood-engravings printed in black and a severe typography. Pichon wrote and edited a Studio Special Number on *The New Book-Illustration in France* (1924).

The most important printing in Italy since 1918 has been at the press of Giovanni Mardersteig at Verona. Of German birth and independent means, Mardersteig obtained permission from the Italian Government to have types cast from the original matrices of Giambattista Bodoni, and with these types set up a printing press in Switzerland in 1922. The Italian Government, however, eventually stipulated that the types should remain in Italy. In 1927 he transferred his establishment to Verona, where he printed the Italian National Edition of the Works of Gabriele d'Annunzio, and many other books, in limited editions, of majestic beauty.

In addition he has acted as typographical consultant to the British publishing firm of Collins, for whom he designed a special type-face, Fontana (1936), based on a type cut by Alexander Wilson in Glasgow about 1760, and somewhat similar in character to Baskerville. Other type-faces designed by Mardersteig are Zeno, Griffo and Dante: the last-named has now been cut for Monotype composition.

Mardersteig was also responsible for the design of the Albatross series of paper-backed books in the nineteen-thirties. These were the first paper-backs to be given first-class design and printing, and their success was so great that their publisher, Holroyd-Reece,

Right: A Bruce Rogers title-page of 1922.

ETHAN FROME

BY

EDITH WHARTON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
WRITTEN
FOR THIS EDITION

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1922

was able after a short time to buy up the only important competing series, Tauchnitz Books.

In 1919, as has already been said, Bruce Rogers returned to the U.S.A. to pursue his career as consultant and free-lance designer of books. His first patrons were the Harvard University Press, to whom he became Adviser, and William Edwin Rudge, printer and publisher in New York; and soon he was working for numerous others, including the Lanston Monotype Machine Company of Philadelphia, the Grolier Club of New York, and Alfred Knopf, the New York publisher, then beginning his career, who has always attached great importance to the appearance of his books. The bibliography of Bruce Rogers's work in Frederic Warde's article on him in *The Fleuron*, No. 4 (limited to books containing B. R.'s mark, name or initials) shows six works in 1921, nine in 1922, eight in 1923 and thirteen in 1924: other bibliographies show how his output continued right up to his death in 1957.

In one important respect Rogers is different from Updike, Newdigate, Morison, Meynell and Simon: he is an artist who drew exquisitely, painted and carved in wood: the others had, or have, little or no manual skill, with the exception of Morison, whose calligraphic hand is too rarely seen. Rogers is so much an artist that many of his books proclaim that they are designed by Rogers: he has not been afraid to fill them with decoration of his own invention. But, although the reason for the edition may often have been his designs rather than the text itself, it is certain that in every case his designs have been conceived in deliberate relation to and harmony with the text. In some cases, his designs may outlive the texts they accompany: time will show. But, when it was right to do so, his books have also been plain and unassuming: Frederic Warde, in the article mentioned above, describes one 'so straightforward in its design that the average reader does not feel himself confronted with any mystery of fine typography, but finds instead a clear and inviting page, presumably full of the author's ideas'; and the greatest example of Rogers's pure typography is the Oxford Coronation Bible of 1935, composed in his own Centaur type, which contains no decoration at all except for

a drawn colophon at the end, a 'Laus Deo', in Rogers's own words, for the completion of the work. This Bible has been called the most beautiful book of the present century; and Bruce Rogers was probably the world's most complete typographer: he has carried the art to a higher degree of personal accomplishment than anyone else.

In 1919 an important venture for book design was started in San Francisco, the Grabhorn Press, founded by Edwin and Robert Grabhorn; they soon earned the reputation of being among the best printers in America. Their first bibliography was published in 1941 and listed 338 books completed: a second bibliography was published in 1956. The Grabhorns have worked in many styles and with many types, and most of their editions have been limited: their reputation is now deservedly world-wide.

On the other side of America, another important printing concern was launched in New York, the Pynson Printers. This firm was started in 1923 by Elmer Adler (b. 1884), a textile manufacturer and book collector, with the intention of producing finely designed editions commercially for publishers—an aim which has been fully realized. The firm's chief clients have been Knopf and Random House (of whom Adler became a director). In 1930 Adler founded America's best graphic periodical, *The Colophon*.

In addition to the presses already mentioned, and those of D. B. Updike and W. E. Rudge, continuing to put out work of the highest quality and design, more and more printing firms in America began to interest themselves in design, or were founded with that object in view. A complete survey would be beyond the scope of the present short book, but outstanding work was being done by John Henry Nash in San Francisco, from 1916 onwards, as a designer and then as owner of a small press; by the Southworth Press at Portland, Maine, directed from 1917 by Fred Anthoenson; by the Lakeside Press at Chicago, one of the earliest great commercial concerns in America to have a design department, under the direction, from 1922 to his death in 1945, of William A. Kittredge, whose work was more concerned with improving the design of everyday matter than with books; by the Marchbanks Press, New York; by Horace Carr at Cleveland, Ohio; by the

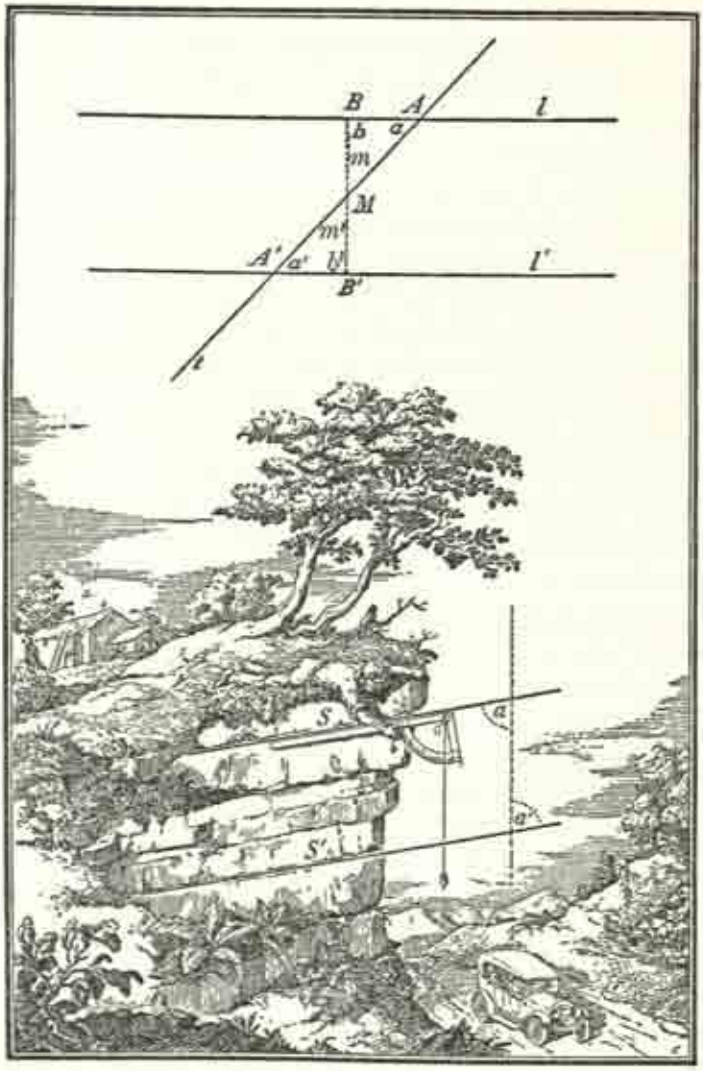


Illustration by T. M. Cleland for Wentworth and Smith's *High School Mathematics*, 1917.

Haddon Craftsmen, New Jersey; by private presses such as The Woolly Whale, New York, the Ward Ritchie Press in Los Angeles, and the Overbrook Press; and by institutional presses such as those of the Universities of California, Columbia, Harvard and Yale.

Frederic Warde (1894–1939), who was printing manager of the Princeton University Press from 1921 to 1924, did much distinguished work on the continent, eventually returning to work with W. E. Rudge. At Bruce Rogers's request he drew the Arrighi italic, used as the italic for Centaur: it was first cut in 1925 in Paris by the punch-cutter Plumet. From 1937 to 1939 he was production manager of the Oxford University Press in New York.

The American contribution to book design during the period includes also the great output of the type designer Frederic Goudy, whose work can be conveniently studied in the autobiographical and well illustrated *A Half-Century of Type Design and Typography* (2 volumes, The New York Typophiles, 1946); Goudy's *The Trajan Capitals* (New York, 1936) and *Typologia* (University of California Press, 1940) are also to be warmly recommended.

America during this period had also four outstanding book-illustrators, Dwiggins, Cleland, Ruzicka and Kent.

W. A. Dwiggins[1] (1880–1956) was born in Martinsville, Ohio. He was first of all a conventional draughtsman, with an unusual command of line. He would turn out exquisite work, for example music covers or vignettes in the style of Watteau or Boucher, or Italianate title-pages; yet, if decorative, his work was beautifully drawn, making perfect line-blocks, and was never feeble. But Dwiggins had prodigious talent and a rich imagination, and gradually made himself a master of calligraphy, book design and typography, as well as of illustration. He developed a unique method of book decoration, by means of transparent celluloid stencils, which he had cut himself, and which he could move around over his design till the right effect was reached, and paint in, to be reproduced by line block. The method is fully illustrated in Paul Beaujon's article on 'Decorative Printers in America' in

[1] See 'The Work of W. A. Dwiggins', by Philip Hofer, *The Dolphin* No. 2, New York, 1935; *The Fleuron*, No. 6; and the A.I.G.A. Catalogue of an Exhibition of W. A. D.'s work, New York, 1937.

Initials and (p. 83) tailpiece drawn by W. A. Dwiggins for *Gulliver's Travels*. Peter Pauper Press, 1948.

The Fleuron, No. 6. He exploited this style in all sorts of ways in both book and commercial design, often made additionally exciting by colour. As a book designer he worked largely for Knopf, designing individual books and series, for example the bindings, end-papers and jackets for the Borzoi Pocket Books from 1929; he restyled *Harper's Magazine* in 1925, *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1932, and re-drew the titles of *The Saturday Review of Literature*, and *The American Mercury*; he wrote *Layout in Advertising* in 1928, a textbook whose best feature is the author's superb diagrams; and, in 1932, a famous tract with profuse illustrations, *Towards a Reform of the Paper Currency*. Among his numerous illustrated books, three of the most memorable are the Balzac *Droll Stories* (1932), the Rabelais *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1936) and *Gulliver's Travels*, illustrated in stencilled colours.

Not every calligrapher is successful if he turns to type design; but Dwiggins's two most important Linotype roman faces, Electra (1935) and Caledonia (1938) were both original and highly successful designs of permanent value to printers.

Dwiggins was also a skilled puppeteer who designed and made his own marionettes and marionette theatre; in all, one of the most original and endearing artists of his age.

T. M. Cleland,[1] born in Brooklyn in 1880, was also an artist of consummate skill, but of less originality than Dwiggins. He did much superb illustration, for books, magazines and advertising,

[1] See *The Decorative Work of T. M. Cleland*, New York, 1929, and the article on Cleland by D. B. Updike in *The Fleuron*, No. 7.

e.g., for Cadillac and Locomobile cars. In particular he excelled at making mathematical diagrams and maps attractive without being facetious or 'olde-worlde': cf. his delightful illustrations for Wentworth and Smith's *High School Mathematics* (New York, 1917) in the style of the early French mathematical books. He did distinguished work for D. B. Updike at the Merrymount Press and became a typographer himself of great ability, especially in period styles. For the American Typefounders Company he designed a large range of Cleland type ornaments and borders, and improved the A.T.F. version of Garamond type. He was also a speaker and occasional writer of wit.

Rudolph Ruzicka was born in Bohemia in 1883, and came to Chicago in 1894, where he was apprenticed to a wood-engraver at the age of 14. In 1906 he worked for an advertising agency and in 1910 he opened his own wood-engraving and print shop. His first important illustrated book was the Grolier Club *New York* of 1915, with thirty of his wood-engravings. He also did some distinguished work for the Merrymount Press. Ruzicka was an engraver of wood and metal, etcher and typographer, and in 'Fairfield' (1939) he designed a roman type for the Mergenthaler Linotype Company which has unfortunately never been made available on this side of the Atlantic.

Rockwell Kent remained a painter and illustrator, of striking power and originality. His *Moby Dick*, published by the Lakeside Press, Chicago, was one of the most popular illustrated books of the period on both sides of the Atlantic: his *Candide* (designed and printed by Pynson Printers for Random House, 1930) one of the most graceful. He also made illustrations for Shakespeare, the *Canterbury Tales*, his own *N. by E.* and many other books.

Chapter 9

General Publishing in England 1920-1939

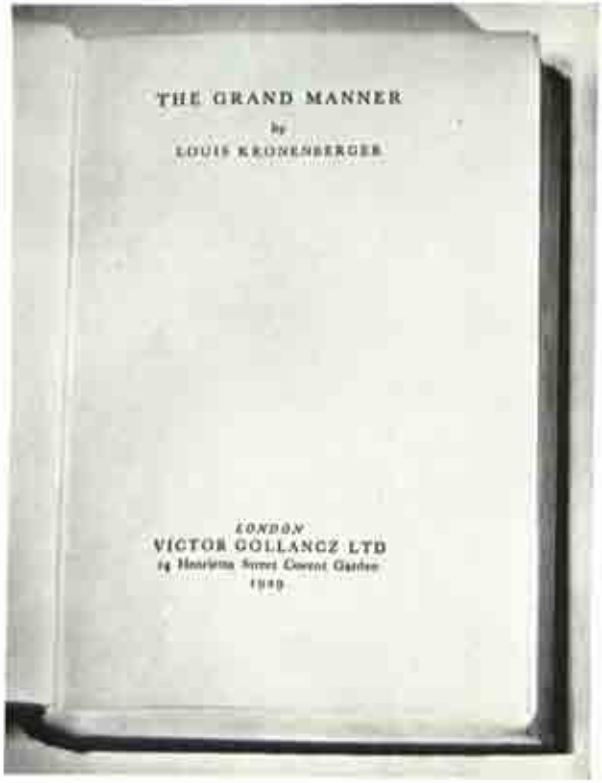
The design of commercially-published books in Britain after the first Great War showed a slow improvement, both in quality and numbers. A few publishers and printers produced good work all the time; gradually they were joined by others. Really bad work became quite rare.

Chatto and Windus have probably the longest unbroken record of excellence in book design of any London publishing firm still in business. Swinburne and Stevenson were among several authors whom they produced in well-designed editions before 1900; probably because they gave a free hand to T. and A. Constable, their printers in Edinburgh. In 1905 Philip Lee Warner joined Chatto and Windus, and a good description of his short but vivid impact on the firm is given in Oliver Warner's Introduction to *A Century of Writers*, the Chatto Centenary volume published in 1955. Lee Warner commissioned a special type-face from Herbert Horne, called Florence, and handed the type over to Bernard Newdigate at the Arden Press, where it was used for the 'Florence Press' series of fine limited editions, which were indeed handsome books. By 1909 Lee Warner had left to found the Medici Society, where he did pioneer work in the development of high-quality colour reproduction by the collotype process.

After the first world war, Chatto and Windus books were designed by Charles Prentice (1891-1949), who was a partner in the firm and raised it to that position of pre-eminence in the design and production of the ordinary plain reading book which it still holds. Prentice's books have a quiet and unpretentious excellence:

11a. *Gulliver's Travels*, 1933. 14″ × 10″. Illustrated by Rex Whistler. Printed in a limited edition by Oxford University Press for the Cresset Press.

11b. *Epitaph on George Moore*, 1935. 7$\frac{3}{16}$″ × 4$\frac{5}{16}$″. The title, engraved on wood by Reynolds Stone, is printed in olive green.



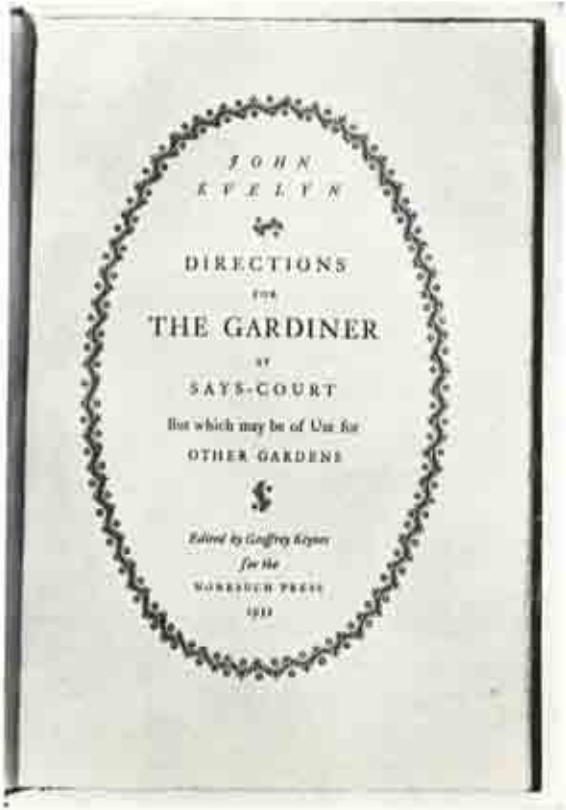
THE GRAND MANNER

by

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

LONDON
VICTOR GOLLANCZ LTD
14 Henrietta Street Covent Garden
1929

12a. *The Grand Manner*, 1929. $7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5''$. The standard title-page for novels, in Baskerville, devised by Stanley Morison for Gollancz.



JOHN
EVELYN

DIRECTIONS
FOR
THE GARDINER
AT
SAYS-COURT
But which may be of Use for
OTHER GARDENS

Edited by Geoffrey Keynes
for the
NONESUCH PRESS
1932

12b. *The Gardiner*, 1932. $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5\frac{1}{2}''$. A Nonesuch title-page designed by Francis Meynell.

60 An Essay on Typography

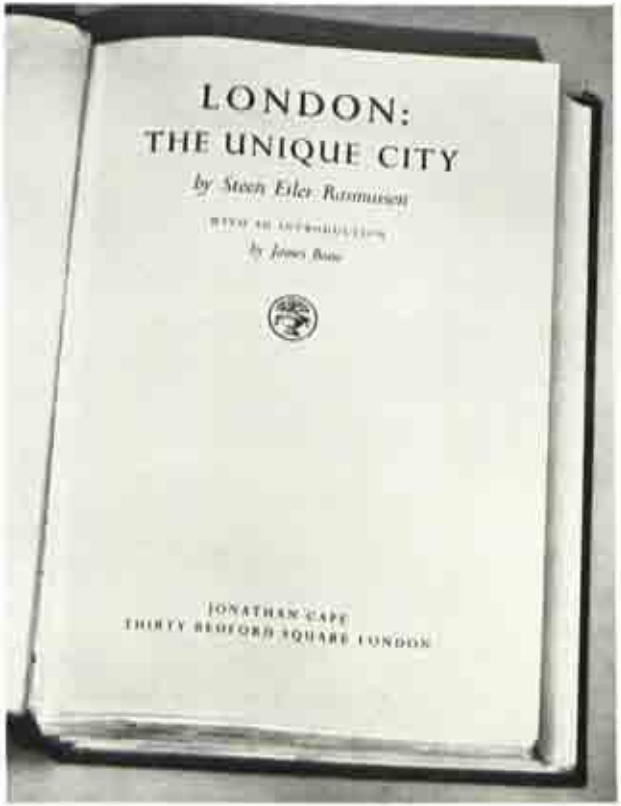
these are only partial survivals, & very few people could, without reference to ancient books, write down even a complete alphabet of either. As far

aefg
aefg

(Figure 23; the upper line of letters is essentially 'Roman lower-case'; the lower essentially 'italic'.)

as we are concerned in modern England, Roman capitals, lower-case and italics are three different alphabets: and all are current 'coin'. But however familiar we are with them, their essential differences are not always easily discovered. It is not a

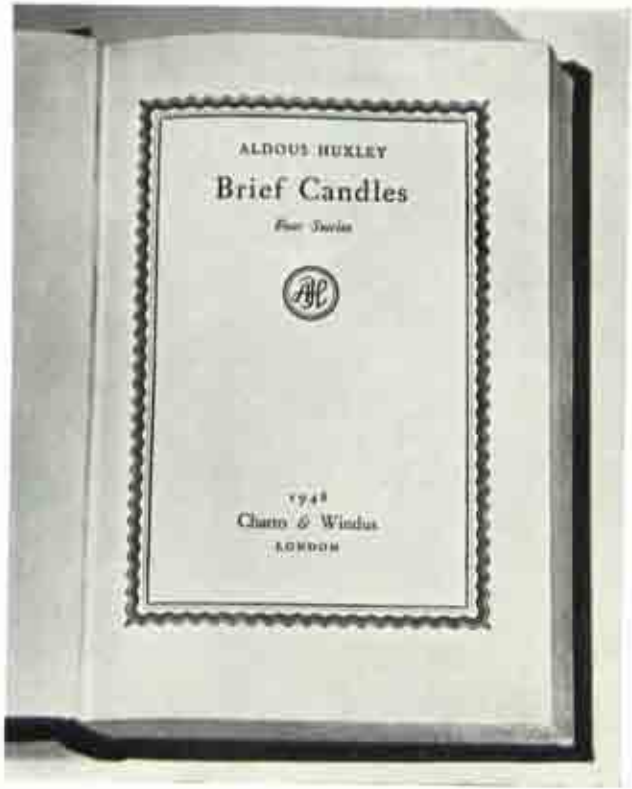
13a. *An Essay on Typography*, 1933. $6\frac{3}{4}'' \times 4\frac{1}{8}''$. Written, designed and printed by Eric Gill. Note the unjustified line endings.



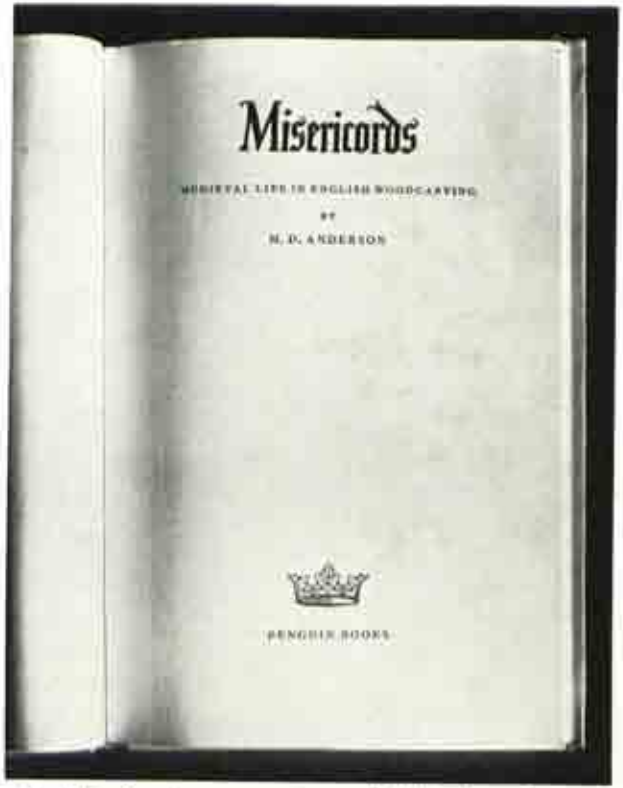
LONDON:
THE UNIQUE CITY
by Steen Eiler Rasmussen
WITH AN INTRODUCTION
by James Bone

JONATHAN CAPE
THIRTY BEDFORD SQUARE LONDON

13b. *London: the Unique City*, 1937. $9'' \times 6''$. The Cape style: set in Gill's Perpetua type.



14a. *Brief Candles*, 1948. 7" × 4½". The title, and device drawn by Berthold Wolpe, are printed in red.



14b. *Misericords*, 1954. 7" × 4⅝". The lettering and device were drawn by Berthold Wolpe. In the King Penguin series.

like Pickering editions they can be recognized because they have that elusive quality of style which Bruce Rogers demanded from the Cambridge University Press. They feel just right in the hand, even before they are opened: a combination of size, thickness, weight of paper and the texture of the binding cloth. Prentice, like Pickering, was addicted to paper labels on spines, with a spare label mounted in the back of the book in reserve. Typical and familiar examples of Prentice's work are the first editions of C. E. Montague, R. H. Mottram and Aldous Huxley. Prentice retired in 1934, but returned to the firm during the war, when he also did some typographical work for Sir Allen Lane and Penguin Books.

Chatto and Windus instituted the Phoenix Library in 1928, a series of excellently-produced cheap reprints, with jackets and bindings designed by Thomas Derrick. Since 1934 the firm's publications have all been designed by Ian Parsons and, later, Norah Smallwood, both partners in the firm.

A high standard of design and production has also been characteristic of the books published by Jonathan Cape, who founded his firm in 1921, in partnership with G. Wren Howard, who had come, via the Army, from the Medici Society. A distinctive house style was evolved by Wren Howard, a business man who knew the importance of combining good appearance with good manufacture. Cape's device, the familiar urn inside a circle, was drawn by W. B. Dukes in 1921, and is so good that one feels that it would be hard to design a bad title-page with it.

Cape produced a few expensive 'fine' editions; but even the ordinary editions of such books as T. E. Lawrence's *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and *Letters* were published in a style of simple dignity that amounted to grandeur, the sort of thing that is, perhaps, better done in Britain than in any other country (Pl. 13b).

A feature of Cape books from the middle thirties has been their jackets designed by Hans Tisdall. Tisdall (born Hans Aufseeser) was a pupil in Germany of Anna Simons. He is one of the two or three men working in Britain today who use lettering creatively

Lettering by Hans Tisdall for a book-jacket. Jonathan Cape, *c.* 1950.

and with originality. Some of his earliest and most striking designs consisted only of lettering, in black and white: in his later and more complicated pictorial jackets, such as the one for Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, the lettering is still integrated with the design, not, as in many jackets, inserted by another hand in an open space. Tisdall is also a mural painter; and as a scenic designer he created one of the most successful and charming parts of the Battersea Pleasure Gardens at the Festival of Britain in 1951.

Victor Gollancz is another publisher who has made a powerful and original contribution to book design. He worked first for the firm of Ernest Benn, where he was responsible for some fine volumes, which must, however, have been published at a loss. These included Stanley Morison's *Four Centuries of Fine Printing* (1924) and *Modern Fine Printing* (1925) and the *Player's Shakespeare*, designed by Bernard Newdigate and printed by the Shakespeare Head Press at Stratford-upon-Avon (e.g., *Cymbeline*, with colour plates and line illustrations by Albert Rutherston, 1923). This project was not completed, but the volumes which did appear are among the highlights of English book design of the period.

Gollancz set up his own imprint in 1927, and in 1928 made Stanley

Morison a director of his firm. As described above (page 43), the standardization of style evolved by Morison was an extraordinary achievement, worth analysing by any student of typography. The materials used were merely Baskerville inside and Gill Sans for the cases (no commissioning of special type-faces here) and the brilliant use of bold types in black and magenta on cheap yellow paper for the jackets. Allied with this production scheme was a flow of brilliantly original advertising copy written by Gollancz himself—not to mention some best-selling authors, such as A. J. Cronin, Louis Golding, Dorothy Sayers, Pamela Frankau and Lady Eleanor Smith. Gollancz is best known for well-designed mass-production; but he also, in his early days, published some great folios, including Stanley Morison's *German Incunabula in the British Museum* (1928), a tome which is bound in black cloth with Gill Sans blocked in gold on the spine, just like the novels.

The firm of Faber and Gwyer produced a few handsome books, such as Bohun Lynch's *A History of Caricature* (1926), before it became Faber and Faber in 1929. Richard de la Mare (b. 1901), a director of the firm and son of the poet, built up a standard of design and production which soon made Faber books among the most distinguished in Britain. Faber and Faber's list was much more varied than those of, for example, Chatto and Windus and Gollancz, and included many art books and poetry: T. S. Eliot was a director, and the firm published Eliot, Spender, Auden and, in fact, most of the leading poets writing in English. De la Mare had a great variety of styles: apart from the overall distinction of typography in the books themselves, one remembers most of all from this pre-war period the typographic jackets of the poetry, the richly-textured auto-lithograph jackets by Barnett Freedman, and the binding cases. Victorian books often bore the most elaborate and occasionally very beautiful designs, in blind or gold and coloured blocking, on their cases, but the rise of the jacket caused cases to become plain and neglected. De la Mare, to make his books more attractive, made the case once again a legitimate field for decoration, and achieved many striking and

distinguished results. De la Mare is the author of *A Publisher on Book Production* (1936), the sixth of the J. M. Dent Memorial Lectures.

As time went on, more publishers took greater care with the design of their books. In 1929 the firm of Cassell and Co. began to use the Curwen Press. One of the first results, quite spectacular, was an edition of *Elsie and the Child*, by Arnold Bennett, with illustrations in a combination of lithography and gouache stencilling by E. McKnight Kauffer. In 1931 Desmond Flower took charge of Cassell's production and amongst Cassell's large output a number of very fine books began to appear. Some were designed by Flower himself; others were designed by Oliver Simon, and are among the most handsome books ever printed at the Curwen Press (see Pl. 9b). Oliver Simon described some of them in his autobiography and gratefully acknowledged the free hand he was given in their creation. Desmond Flower had others designed by the Cambridge University Press, by Hague and Gill at High Wycombe and by Herbert Simon at the Kynoch Press at Birmingham.

In 1935 the famous Everyman series of cheap editions, which had remained unchanged typographically since its inception in 1905 (since when over 28 million had been sold) were re-designed, with simpler binding styles and plainer title-pages, embellished with decorations by Eric Ravilious.

Some of the finest large books of this period were published by the Cresset Press, under the direction of Dennis Cohen. The most magnificent was the three-volume *Gulliver's Travels* (1933), printed at the Oxford University Press in 18 pt. Baskerville and illustrated with hand-coloured drawings by Rex Whistler in the manner of steel engravings (Pl. 11a). Others included a profusely illustrated *Apocrypha*, printed by the Curwen Press (1929) and the *Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained* with wood-engravings by Galanis printed by the Shakespeare Head Press in 1930 (see p. 75).

Some notably well-made books came from imprints which have now disappeared or been amalgamated, including Peter Davies, R. Cobden-Sanderson (son of the founder of the Doves Press), Etchells and Macdonald, and Frederick Miles. And from many

others of the best-known British publishing firms came ordinary books of unpretentious yet excellent design.

The contribution of the printing trade in Britain to the revival of printing is difficult to assess. A few firms have given a lead not only to Britain but to the world. But on the whole it must be admitted that the impetus towards better design has come from publishers and advertisers, often against actual opposition from printers. The situation is now changing rapidly, but until 1939 few printers had taken steps to train their own staffs in typography, and the trade papers of the printing industry reflected an utter ignorance of and indifference to good design.

Foremost in upholding traditions of good printing, after the Curwen Press, were the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses.

In 1925 Oxford appointed John Johnson (1882–1956), an egyptologist, as Printer to the University. Johnson was a great and strong man. He was able not only to turn the Press into an efficient commercial organization, but he was also enough of an artist, as well as scholar, to establish a style fitting a University Press. The Oxford University Press style was bold and robust, often archaic, yet satisfying, and never timid: Johnson once stated that he did not believe in much white on title-pages.

In contrast, the style being developed at the Cambridge University Press was more delicate and imaginative. Walter Lewis had been appointed Printer in 1923, with Stanley Morison as typographical adviser two years later. Besides their university work, both Presses made books for outside clients: Cambridge, for example, printed the Nonesuch *Don Quixote*, the magnificent Nonesuch *Shakespeare* and a fine *Aesop* for Harrap with engravings by Stephen Gooden. An unusually luxurious Cambridge book was the catalogue of the collection of Portuguese books of ex-King Manuel of Portugal.

Oxford printed several Nonesuch volumes, and *Vanity Fair* for the Limited Editions Club of New York. Oxford's finest book before the war was the Lectern Bible designed by Bruce Rogers and published in 1935. A full and technical account of its making has been written by Bruce Rogers and published by the Press. Its

Colophon for Cambridge University Press, engraved on wood by George Mackley.

plain and noble pages are one of the greatest typographical achievements of the period.

A commercial printing firm which came to the fore during the nineteen-twenties, both for its technical excellence and advanced ideas on design, was Lund, Humphries in Bradford. Under the energetic direction of Eric Humphries it established a reputation for technical excellence in composition in many languages and for fine printing both by letterpress and photo litho-offset. Lund, Humphries designed, printed and published the *Penrose Annual*, an important annual contributed to by the whole printing industry and about the only such publication of which the industry could be proud. Lund, Humphries introduced to this country the work of Jan Tschichold when he was still the apostle of avant-garde asymmetry; and, through their publishing office in London, directed by Eric Gregory, became associated with the work of many of the leading modern artists in Europe.

A smaller press, which also made an outstanding reputation, was the Kynoch Press at Birmingham, owned by the giant corporation Imperial Chemical Industries. It was directed by Herbert Simon until he joined his brother at the Curwen Press; and Harry Carter worked there for a period, during which he designed the Kynoch Press Type-book, which is still, in the opinion of many, the most attractive type specimen book ever issued by any printer. The Kynoch Press Note Books, which still appear, are a most enterprising form of publicity, being charmingly designed diaries with illustrations commissioned from a distinguished list of artists, including T. L. Poulton (1930), Eric Ravilious (1933) and Edward Bawden (1935).

The Baynard Press in London became known for its high quality colour lithography, under the care of the master-craftsman T. E. Griffits. The Baynard Press also commissioned decorative alphabets from Claudia and Barnett Freedman, and did commercial work of a high standard, but little book-work.

Other book printers who maintained their previously high reputations were R. and R. Clark and T. and A. Constable of Edinburgh, R. MacLehose of Glasgow and the Westminster and Chiswick Presses in London: their imprints will be found on many well-designed and well-printed books of the period. The relationship of R. and R. Clark, and their Managing Director William Maxwell, with Bernard Shaw (who would allow no one else but Clarks to print for him) has been amusingly described by James Shand in *Alphabet and Image* 8 (December 1948).

In the nineteen-thirties, James Shand brought his family firm, the Shenval Press at Hertford, into the front rank of book and magazine printers. Much of their typography was designed by Robert Harling, who also edited, from 1936 to 1939, a brilliant typographical quarterly, *Typography*, which the Shenval Press printed and published. Harling's contribution to typographic design of the present period has been considerable, but has been greater in the field of magazine, newspaper and advertising layout than in books. He initiated the revival of Victorian type-faces and used them with dazzling effect on jackets for Heinemann and other

publishers during the thirties, on the covers of his own *Typography*, and on those of *Art and Industry* for a few colourful months in 1940. As adviser to the typefounding firm of Stephenson, Blake and Co. of Sheffield, he designed Chisel (in effect, a Victorian face revived by inlining) and revived Thorne Shaded, Bessemer Elongated Roman, Thorowgood Italic, and other excellent additions to the book-jacket and display designer's repertory.

In July 1935 came the climax of the whole printing revival, when Penguin[1] books appeared, at sixpence each. The first list was of ten titles, all reprints, of which the first four were Maurois' *Ariel*, Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, Susan Ertz's *Madame Claire*, and Linklater's *Poet's Pub*. The idea of cheap paper-backed books, even at sixpence, was not new; various series had been tried but none had succeeded. Penguins were conceived by Allen Lane, then the young managing director of The Bodley Head, and nephew of John Lane who had founded the firm. Like all geniuses in business, he had a simple idea, which was that there was a new young public who would read good books if they could buy them for sixpence. To sell at sixpence at least twenty thousand copies of each title had to be printed and sold. When Allen Lane proposed the idea, nearly everyone in the book trade predicted failure; and the professional booksellers did not order enough copies to permit the scheme to be launched. But Allen Lane obtained the orders he required from the Woolworth and Selfridge departmental stores and as soon as the books were offered to the public his vision was vindicated. Social historians can explain the reasons for the Penguin success—two million books were sold in just over a year, seven million in two years—but it is important to realize that it was real books, not trash, that Lane was selling, and that in May 1937 he started Pelicans, in order to provide, still at sixpence, serious works by such authors as G. B. Shaw, Olaf Stapledon, Leonard Woolley, H. G. Wells, G. D. H. Cole and Julian Huxley. The time was right for such a venture; and Lane was right too (but also courageous) in insisting that Penguins should be well designed.

[1] See Edmond Segrave, *Penguins: a Retrospect* (1951), Sir W. E. Williams, *The Penguin Story* (1956), which contains a list of all Penguin publications with dates, and *The Monotype Recorder*, annual Book numbers, 1936–8.

From the start, their appearance was bright, simple, modern, distinctive and sound. The first Penguins, and all additions to the family up to about 1938, were designed by Edward Young. In 1936, Monotype Imprint was selected as the standard face for Penguins. In 1937 this was changed to Monotype Times, a face whose versatility was demonstrated most effectively in the Penguin editions of Shakespeare's Plays which began appearing in April 1937. Penguin Books led the way in bringing back good design, via good literature, into everyday life. They showed manufacturers of all other kinds of products that the best was not too good for mass consumption. Their achievements in design since the war have been even more remarkable and will be described in the next chapter.

Colophon for Cambridge University Press, engraved on wood by Reynolds Stone.

Chapter 10

The Post-War Scene

Oliver Simon's death in 1956 was a grievous loss to the whole world of printing. The last important books he designed before his death were the Catalogues of Major J. R. Abbey's colour-plate books, a magnificent collection which has now gone to the United States. These large quarto volumes, four in all, are illustrated with collotype plates and line blocks, and form a model of how a massive bibliography may be attractively designed.

The success of Oliver Simon's *Introduction to Typography* (1945), which included a reprint as a paper-backed Pelican, showed the interest of the post-war public in book design. His only other book was his autobiography, *Printer and Playground* (1956). Some of the material in it had already appeared in the pages of *Signature*, a typographical journal which Oliver Simon founded in 1935, and of which fifteen issues appeared up to December 1940, and a further eighteen (New Series) before it was terminated in 1954. *Signature* always contained articles of importance, and never descended to the trifling, as some book-collectors' magazines have done. Its balance was nicely divided between the historical and the contemporary. Its make-up was sober and traditional (unlike *Typography* and *Alphabet and Image*, for example) but was enlivened by many illustrations in various processes, often of the work of painters or illustrators who were far from being traditional.

Oliver Simon, besides being a great book designer, was an extremely able designer of periodicals; one of his most successful ventures in this field was his styling of the weekly *New Statesman*. Among the other periodicals which he designed and also printed

PALATINO abcdefghi
& *ITALIC* jklmnopq
rstuvwxyz 1234567890
ABCDEFGHIJKLMN
OPQRSTUVWXY&Z
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvw
xyz ABCDEFGHIJ
KLMNOPQRSTU
VWXYZ & 1234567890
ABCDEFG
HIJKLMN
OPQRSTU
VWXY&Z

Designed 1949/53 by Hermann Zapf for D. Stempel AG Type-Foundry in Frankfurt am Main & Linotype GmbH

at the Curwen Press were *Horizon, Wine and Food* and *British Book News*. He also designed and printed a series of booklets accompanying Arts Council exhibitions which provided opportunities for using decorated type-faces and unusual cover papers; but perhaps his pleasantest achievement was the charming shower of compliment slips, address labels and notepaper—decorated perhaps with fleurons and often printed on fine papers—which descended from the Curwen Press for so many years on those firms and individuals discerning enough to ask for them.

Along with the Curwen Press, the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge have been the cornerstones of fine printing in Britain since the war. The retirement at Oxford of Dr John Johnson in 1947 was a loss, but under his successors, Charles Batey and Vivian Ridler, the standards have not been lowered. Oxford had the privilege of presenting the Bible actually used for the Coronation Service of Queen Elizabeth II, and the opportunity was taken of producing a new one that would be less costly than the great Bruce Rogers Bible of 1935, yet distinguished and modern in design. The binding, designed by Lynton Lamb, attracted much attention and was reproduced on a subsequent commercial edition: the text pages, set in 14 pt. Monotype Ehrhardt, with Perpetua for initials and book titles, were simple, yet noble. Another new Bible of typographical interest produced by Oxford is the Octavo Sheldon Bible, for which the type-face was specially designed by Jan Van Krimpen. Both the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses produced distinguished versions of the Coronation service in 1953. Oxford's was set in the seventeenth-century Fell types; Cambridge used Monotype Bembo, with Perpetua titling.

Other finely designed and printed editions from Oxford were two books printed for the Roxburghe Club in 1953, Millar's *La Somme Le Roy* and H. M. Nixon's *Twelve Books*; and in the field of ordinary commercial publishing, E. H. Fellowe's *The Office of the Holy Communion as set by John Merbecke* (1950) and *Venetian Opera in the Seventeenth Century* (1954). The two latter books, relatively cheap in price, made use of the Fell types, which only the Oxford University Press possesses. Mention should also be

*ABCDEFGH
IJKLMNOPQRSTU
VWXYZ & KQRS
1234567890
MICHELANGELO

Designed by Hermann Zapf 1953
for D. Stempel AG, Frankfurt am Main

SISTINA TITLING
*ABCDEFGHI
JKLMNOPQRSTU
VWXYZ & LQRT
1234567890

made here of the Oxford Illustrated Trollopes, which show perfectly the standard set by Oxford in the commercial production of literature. The novels are illustrated by contemporary lithographers, including Lynton Lamb, Charles Mozley and Leonard Huskinson: the *Autobiography* was ingeniously illustrated with contemporary prints and photographs from John Johnson's 'Sanctuary', or Museum of Victoriana.

Walter Lewis retired from the position of Printer to Cambridge University in 1945 and was succeeded by Brooke Crutchley. A number of important and finely-produced bibliographies have appeared from Cambridge since the war, of which the most notable were Michael Sadleir's *XIXth Century Fiction* in two volumes (1951) and *The Rothschild Library*, two volumes (1954). Both were illustrated with collotype plates.

Cambridge has also printed, for the Limited Editions Club of New York, the most ambitious illustrated books made in Britain since the war, including *Anna Karenina* with magnificent lithographs by Barnett Freedman, *The Newcomes* with stencil-coloured line drawings by Edward Ardizzone, and *The Voyage of the Beagle*, with wood-engravings by Robert Gibbings.

The Cambridge University Printer issues each Christmas a 'keepsake' or small book specially printed for the friends of the Press. Since so few books of merit have been privately printed in Britain since the war these are of especial interest; at least one, Stanley Morison's *A Tally of Types*, issued in this way at Christmas 1953, was of major importance to students and historians of typography.

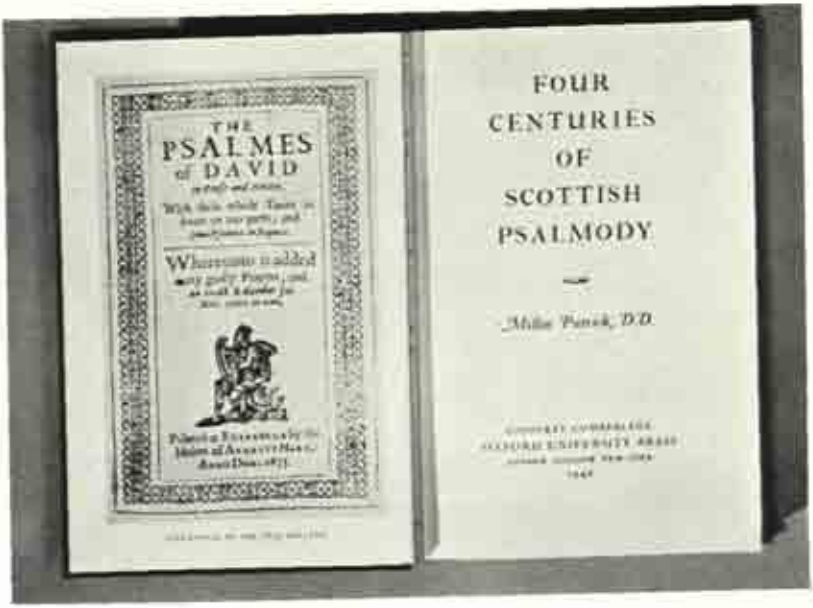
Another man who regularly issues fine editions as presents to his friends at Christmas is Sir Allen Lane, the publisher of Penguin Books (who was knighted in 1952). In this way he issued in 1945 an edition of *The Ancient Mariner* illustrated with colour lithographs by Duncan Grant, and in 1950 *The Nun's Priest's Tale* with wood-engravings by Lynton Lamb.

In 1945 Allen Lane made a major contribution to the improvement of British typography by inviting Jan Tschichold over from Switzerland to become chief typographical designer to Penguin

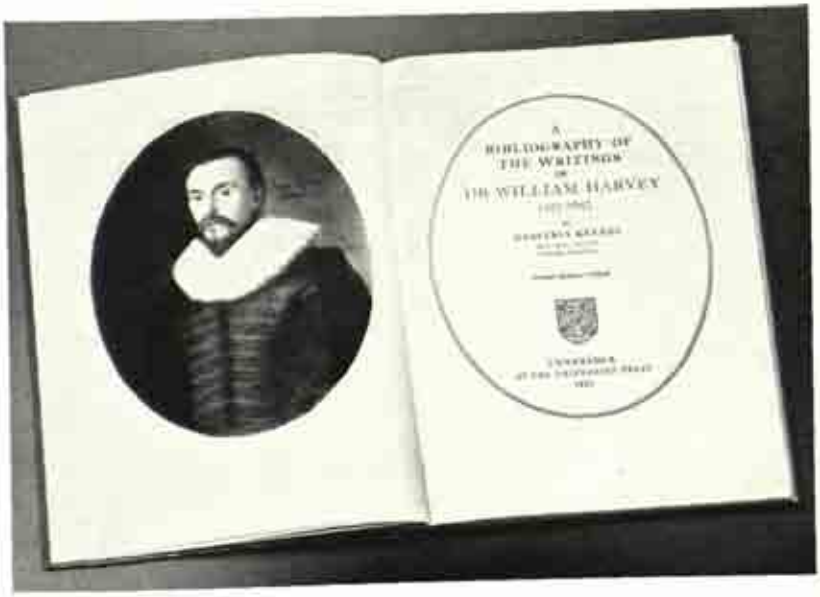
Dedication page engraved on wood by Reynolds Stone for The Nonesuch Shakespeare, 1953.

Books. Penguins had been an inestimable boon to servicemen and civilians throughout the war—what would we have done without them in our pockets and kitbags?—but standards in design, in editing and printing had inevitably fallen; and a typographical dictator was needed to set the house in order again. Tschichold did this in three years; and since the production of Penguins and the numerous other series in the family necessarily involved nearly every major book-printing firm in the country, his reforms had wide repercussions. His job, in the first place, was to insist on certain fundamental rules of good composition, such as close setting and the letter-spacing of all words in capital letters; and secondly to introduce standardizations of typographical style, such as the way dashes, quotation marks, marks of omission and so on should be set. A degree of uniformity had to be introduced into the treatment of preliminary pages and chapter headings, without sacrificing individuality and avoiding fussiness. Every single title-page was carefully designed as an individual job. All particular problems that might arise in an individual book—such as tabular matter, diagrams, verse quotations, etc.—had to be considered on their merits and solutions suitable for mass-production worked out. Modifications in the original basic cover designs were introduced; but no standardization of type-face was made, and all the classic Monotype faces were used, depending on what the printer held and what was suitable for the book concerned. As a result, the best literature was offered to the widest public in the most sophisticated and carefully-designed typographic dress; and was bought. After three years, Tschichold's original task was finished and he returned to Switzerland. He was succeeded by Hans Schmoller, a designer in whose hands the typography of Penguin Books has continued to advance, so that they are among the most distinguished typographical products of the world. Considering the wide scope of the Penguin publishing programme, which is now no longer even confined to paper-books, this is no mean feat.

Sir Francis Meynell has revived the Nonesuch imprint and published several notable volumes, of which perhaps the most important was the 4-volume Shakespeare. Such is his vitality that



15a. *Four Centuries of Scottish Psalmody*, 1949. 8½" × 5½". The title-page is set in the Fell types. Oxford University Press.



15b. *A Bibliography of the Writings of Dr William Harvey*, 1953. 9¾" × 7¼". An elegant Cambridge University Press title-page designed by John Dreyfus.

16a. Contemporary series of well-produced cheaper books in Britain: Penguins, King Penguins, Everyman, Novel Library and World's Classics.

16b. Some contemporary British cases for commercial editions: Chatto & Windus, Nonesuch, Gollancz, Murray, Faber and Phaidon.

GENESIS

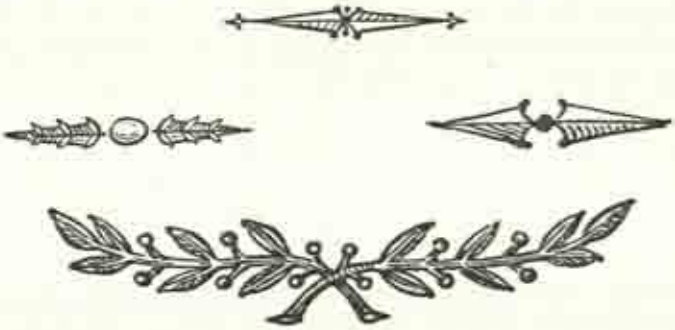
'Decorata'

Albertus

ALBERTUS BOLD TITLING

HYPERION *in upper and lower case*

PEGASUS in upper and lower case



Some types and devices designed by Berthold Wolpe
'Decorata' is exclusive to the Westerham Press

he is probably even now planning a masterpiece to outshine anything he has yet done. Not the least important part of his influence on good design in British printing has been wielded through H.M. Stationery Office, to which he was appointed Typographical Adviser at the end of the war. He set up a design department under Harry Carter, which has done enormous good in improving all kinds of Government printing and succeeded in making official publications look as if they had been written by and for human beings. The careful and sensible attention paid to the design of the many technical books published by the Stationery Office (the Official Publishers to the Crown) is already having a beneficial influence on general technical publishing. Since Carter went to become Archivist at Oxford University Press this department has been headed by Alan Dodson.

Of the other book-printing firms, the Shenval Press has continued both to expand and to maintain its standards. Under the lively editorship of Robert Harling it printed and published *Alphabet and Image* 1–8 (1946–48) and *Image* 1–8 (1949–52), two stimulating periodicals devoted to the visual arts, and a series of interesting if slight monographs on British book illustrators. The Ipswich firm of W. S. Cowell, Ltd, under the energetic leadership of R. Geoffrey Smith, has since 1945 come to the front rank, particularly for the printing of illustrations by lithography. They have also produced three remarkable type-and-printing specimen books compiled and designed by their typographic consultant John Lewis.

Some notable art books have been printed and published by Lund, Humphries, who are, technically, among the finest letterpress and lithographic printers in Europe; while unspectacular but first class book printing is done as a matter of course by many other firms, especially the Kynoch Press at Birmingham, R. and R. Clark and T. and A. Constable of Edinburgh, R. MacLehose of Glasgow, the Alden Press at Oxford, R. Clay and Sons at Bungay, Hazell, Watson and Viney and Hunt, Barnard at Aylesbury, Butler and Tanner at Frome, William Clowes at Beccles, and the Chiswick Press in London.

*abcdefghijklmno
pqrstuvwxyz ABC
DEFGHIJKLMNO
PQRSTUVWXYZ&
abcdefghijklmnopqrs
tuvwxyz ABCDEFGH
IJKLMNOPQRSTUV
WXY & Z * Diotima and Italic
designed by Gudrun Zapf–v. Hesse for
D. Stempel AG Frankfurt/M (Germany)
& Ariadne Initials ABCDEF
GHIJKLMNOP
QRSTUVWXYZ

In Reynolds Stone and Berthold Wolpe Britain has two outstanding lettering artists; the former famous for his wood-engraved lettering, particularly in the italic style, and for Minerva, a roman display face designed for the Linotype Corporation: the latter for Monotype Albertus, perhaps the most successful modern display face that has yet been designed, and designer also of Tempest, Hyperion, Pegasus and a new decorative face provisionally called Decorata. For many years Wolpe's chief work has been designing books and book-jackets for Faber and Faber, publishers of this book.

Among other leading British graphic designers are four painters, Edward Bawden, Kenneth Rowntree, Lynton Lamb and Laurence Scarfe, who have all made original contributions to book and advertising design. Bawden and Scarfe were students at the old Royal College of Art, which was reorganized after the war under the dynamic headship of Professor Robin Darwin. The new Graphic Design School, which includes Edward Bawden and John Nash on its staff, and is headed by Richard Guyatt, is turning out a new generation of designers which is already making its mark. The Royal College of Art has established its own private press, The Lion and Unicorn Press, which prints three books a year.

In the rest of Europe, Switzerland has, since the war, become a centre of fine printing and careful, even clinical, typography. It is the adopted home of Imre Reiner, born in Hungary in 1900, the designer of several types (e.g. Corvinus, Reiner Script and Primula ornaments) and a distinguished wood-engraver, etcher, and book designer; it is also the home of Tschichold and of the important international magazine *Graphis*. One of the most distinguished Swiss-born typographers is Max Caflisch, a book designer of outstanding ability who is Art Director of the printing firm of Benteli in Berne. Much fine printing for France, and some for Germany, is done in Switzerland.

In Holland, perhaps the most distinctive feature of book design is the quality of the calligraphy associated with book printing, whether on title-pages or jackets. The work of Jan Van Krimpen has already been described (p. 71); of the younger designers,

OPTIMA

a new type-face
by Hermann Zapf

designed for D. Stempel AG and for Linotype GmbH
Frankfurt am Main · Germany (published Drupa 1958)

abcdefghijklm
nopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJK
LMNOPQRST
UVWXYZ&MN
£12345$67890

OPTIMA-ITALIC abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABC DEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ 1234567890

1234567890 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVW XYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz OPTIMA-BOLD

mention should be made of Dick Dooijes, a pupil of De Roos and head of the design department of the Amsterdam Type Foundry; Sem Hartz, engraver of Dutch postage stamps and bank-notes and successor to Van Krimpen as chief designer for the great printing firm of Enschedé; and Dick Elffers, Helmut Salden, Henk Krijger and Theo Kurpershoek.

In Germany the standard of book design and printing is extremely high, and several type designers of distinction are working for the great type-founding firms such as Bauer, Klingspor, Stempel and Weber. Georg Trump (b. 1896) is the designer of Schadow-Antiqua, Trump-Mediaval, Delphin, Codex and other types, for the Weber Foundry. Professor Herbert Post is the designer of Post-Antiqua and other types of splendid calligraphic quality. Hermann Zapf designed Palatino, Michelangelo and Sistina, classical roman faces, and demonstrated his outstanding qualities as a calligrapher in a book *Feder und Stichel* (1950), later published in the U.S.A. as *Pen and Graver*. German books of today show greater liveliness than they have done for some years and the German genius for black-and-white is always evident.

In Germany and Switzerland there is a tendency towards typography for typography's sake, and exquisite treatment is accorded to insignificant material, reminding one of Roy Campbell's epigram:

They praise the firm restraint with which you write.
I'm with you there, of course.
You use the snaffle and the curb all right,
But where's the bloody horse?

In France it is just the opposite: important matter is often printed carelessly, which perhaps reflects a truer sense of values. Typography by itself has never played an important part in France, where 'the art of the book' (a thriving sub-division of the Paris art world) usually means 'art on book pages'. There is probably no important French artist of the present period who has not made autolithographs or engravings for publication in a lavish, limited and, usually, exciting edition; either as a volume devoted solely to

his own art; or as illustrations to a text. In the latter category there are, for example, Chagall's etchings for Gogol's *Les Ames mortes* (1948), *La Fontaine* (1952) and the Bible (1956); Matisse's lithographs for Baudelaire (1947), Ronsard (1948) and many other works; Picasso's etchings and woodcuts for Balzac's *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu* (1931), *Histoire naturelle de Buffon* (1942), etc.; Rouault's *Cirque de l'étoile filante* (1933), *Passion*, by Suarès (1939), and Baudelaire; Derain's *Satyricon*, La Fontaine, and Rabelais (1945); and numerous others. The inspiration and driving force behind many of these books came from Ambroise Vollard (1867–1939), a picture-dealer turned publisher. His books, and others of the same kind issued in Paris since the war, are certainly, among the entire printed output of the world, splendidly unique; although some of them should perhaps rather be called 'portfolios' than 'books'. Vollard himself remarked simply of the *Passion* illustrated by Rouault (for which a special press had to be constructed to print the extended scale of shading in the wood-cut interpretations of Rouault's drawings): 'On n'a jamais fait de tels livres et on n'en fera plus'.[1]

In ordinary French commercial book-production, the normal standards of design and production are not high, but unconventional and exciting work, particularly in the use of illustrations and in jacket design, is occasionally seen. The printing works of Draeger Frères, who print the French bank-notes, can produce colour gravure printing of a quality possibly unsurpassed elsewhere in the world (to be seen, for example, in the folio volumes on *Versailles* (1949), *Fontainebleau* (1951) and *Châteaux de la Loire* (1956)); and the small lithographic establishment of Mourlot in Paris, where Picasso and many other artists have worked, is world-famous.

In America, although New York is the centre of the book trade, publishing also takes place in San Francisco, in Chicago, in Boston, and in many other towns, and there is a great diversity of styles. Knopf must be mentioned first as the publisher who has most

[1] See *Ambroise Vollard: Editeur*, by Una E. Johnson, New York, 1944; and the review of it in *Signature*, New Series 1, July, 1946.

consistently maintained a high and always lively standard of design in his books. But many others are also producing excellent work. If the general standard of design in commercial book production is not high, at least in that part of it that is designed there is, as might be expected, a welcome virility and sense of freedom and willingness to try anything at least once. Many Universities maintain their own presses, and encourage skilled designers to make their publications look attractive—and usually they are of an extremely high standard. Notable among these are the University Presses of California, Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Duke, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Princeton, Stanford and Yale.

A recent development of American book production which has not yet been copied in this country is the appearance of various series of paper-backed books (e.g. Harvest, Vintage, Rinehart) designed by first-class designers and differing from paper-backs in Britain in being finely printed on good quality paper.

Among American book designers, excellent work is done by so many that it would be impossible to list them all, but among the best-known names are Ray Nash, Joseph Blumenthal, Sol Marks, Alvin Lustig, Alvin Eisenman, Peter and Edna Beilenson of the Peter Pauper Press, Morris Colman and P. J. Conkwright; while among the many distinguished calligraphers who work for books the names of Oscar Ogg and James F. Hayes are outstanding.

But it is perhaps in their wealth of illustrators and artists—many of them immigrants from Europe—that the United States are most to be envied by Europe.

Tailpiece by W. A. Dwiggins for *Gulliver's Travels*, 1948.

Chapter 11

The Future of Book Design

The first problem of a book designer is to find a text that is worth printing and that needs printing. His next problem is to print it correctly: not always so easy as it sounds. The author who is capable of providing copy that is really ready for the printer is rare indeed. The best-disciplined in this way are usually the ones who have worked in newspaper offices and have been confronted by an angry compositor waving illegible copy. 'If copy is crabbed,' wrote Dr R. W. Chapman in his introduction to Collins's *Authors' and Printers' Dictionary*, 'so that it cannot be read without an effort, there is always the temptation to fling it at the printer and see what happens': what usually happens is a bill for author's corrections, which the publisher has to pay.

Besides these problems is the more serious one of freedom to print not only how one likes but what one believes in: a problem that shows signs of requiring more and not less attention as the century progresses.

If these major issues have not been resolved the finicking questions of type-face and paper do not matter. But if they have been answered satisfactorily, then energy can be spared for making books look well, after they have been written well.

From time to time, during the present century, the conventions of book design have been strongly challenged. The new period now beginning, called 'eotechnic' by Lewis Mumford, has already produced new art-forms in painting, music and literature. And if literature is changing its forms, the shape of books and of letter-forms cannot remain static. Books must be designed for *today*, say the reformers, and outworn conventions of design must be discarded.

As related above, the first attacks occurred in post-1918 Germany, as a development of the Bauhaus movement, at the time when cubism ('the dogma of the straight line') was replacing art nouveau ('the dogma of the wavy line'). Today another strong movement towards reforming or at least revitalizing book design is developing in America. One of its manifestoes, a book called *Books For Our Time* (New York, 1951) is worth serious consideration.

Changes in the design of practical objects, like ships, cups or books, are dictated by practical considerations: you do not change the design of a thing if it is working perfectly and looks all right, but you do change it if you can find a way of making it work better. Sailing ships were very beautiful objects indeed, but they had to be superseded by steamships because steamships were more efficient: you could be more sure of getting from A to B in a given time.

The shapes of the letters of our alphabet have always been subjected to this process. When printing was introduced into England, there were two basic alternative alphabets, the gothic, or black-letter, and the roman. Gradually the roman ousted the gothic (there were practical advantages on both sides, but the roman, with capitals which could be used by themselves, and the addition of the italic alphabet, was more flexible, and also it was probably easier to write) and ever since then has been subject to the normal processes of refining and perfecting in use. It has not remained static. A major modification, the elimination of serifs, was introduced in the early nineteenth century, and has been revived in the present century as a book-face: but the verdict has been reached that for continuous reading matter it is simply not as efficient as type with serifs. For other uses, such as for newspaper headlines, and for single words on railway stations and maps, sans serif is excellent.

How far any particular letter may be modified without losing its identity is sometimes debatable; but true legibility depends on each letter being clearly different from the others. Just as the elimination of serifs reduces the distinctiveness of several letters,

so would alterations of proportion—although other practical considerations may require such alterations. For example, typesetting by machine would be greatly simplified if all letters were the same width. On most typewriters it is in fact so, and the letter 'i' is exactly the same width as capital 'W'. The necessary distortion does not, however, help either legibility or aesthetic appearance. If it did, it would be adopted by type designers.

So we are left, at least for the moment, with our roman and italic alphabets, not much changed from when they were first cut as types 450 years ago, but not static.

But what of book design as a whole? Are books, as we are accustomed to them, out of date in this world of Picasso, Stravinsky and the U.N. Secretariat Building in New York?

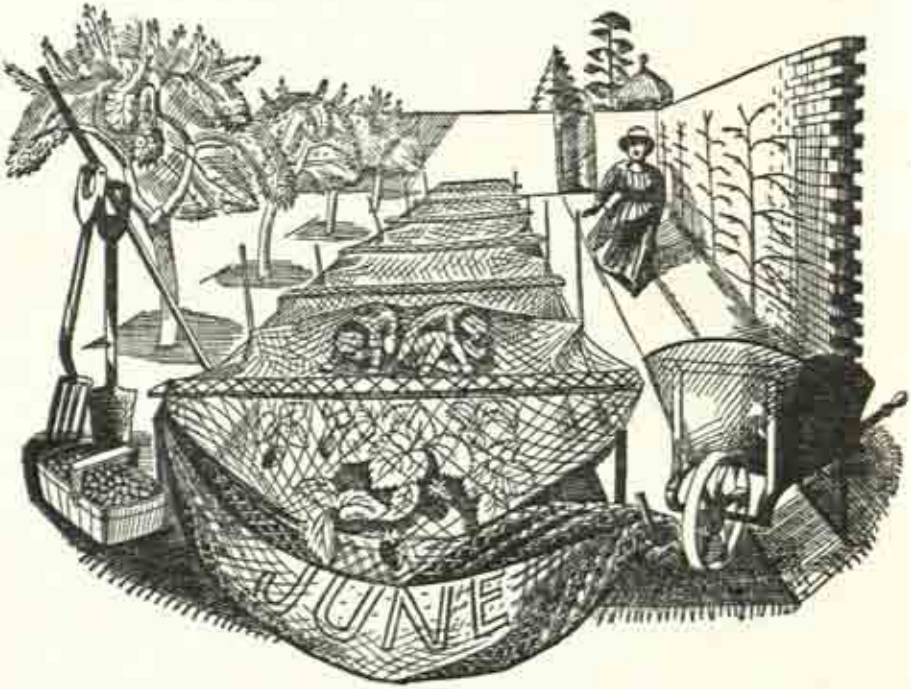
Insofar as a book is a continuous piece of text (which excludes picture-books, dictionaries, etc.) its present form (oblong, upright, not too thick or big for convenient holding, made of sheets of paper fixed at the back) is the best that has so far been evolved. If anyone suggests something better—perhaps plastic sheets printed electronically by wireless—it will be given a fair trial.

How the type is laid out on the pages, and what the title-page and binding look like, are different matters. An enormous amount of energy is wasted by the protagonists of modernism in proposing and defending statements which no sensible person would ever contradict. Obviously, modern books require modern covers and modern typography. The point of conflict comes when instead of modern typography we are offered merely bad typography, which does not perform its first function of conveying the author's meaning effortlessly to the reader. In bindings and title-pages, very few words need be conveyed: it can be argued, occasionally, that no words are needed at all. A mood, a style, a subject can be expressed visually, and a book's uniqueness and individuality can be established by making it utterly distinctive, or by using a non-verbal symbol—'the purple-and-green book', or, 'the book with the anchor on it'. In this way, originality is welcome, and many brilliant examples of it are illustrated in *Books For Our Time*. But in its own text pages this book suffers from a compulsion to discard

the ordinary book page without offering something better: and changes in the design of book pages, like changes in government, if they are not for the better, are nearly always for the worse.

New ways of dressing up books (which is all that anyone has so far found) are necessary and are found as often as a clever and inventive designer tries. But as long as a book is an object to be held in the hand and read by the eyes in roman type, changes in the actual arrangement of the type must be criticized always from the functional point of view: do they make reading easier or pleasanter? If not, the ordinary solution must be retained: the book is for reading, after all.

THE END



Drawing by Edward Bawden from *Good Food*, 1932.

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