

ful, particularly in Great Britain. But it has much to offer research libraries in general, so it is natural to hope that the book will be strengthened in a second edition.—*Andrew D. Osborn, Harvard College Library.*

Books About Books: The Anglo-American Tradition

The Alchemy of Books. By Lawrence Clark Powell. Los Angeles, The Ward Ritchie Press, 1954. 263 p. \$4.50.

A History of the Old English Letter Foundries, with Notes Historical and Bibliographical on the Rise and Progress of English Typography. By Talbot Baines Reed. A new ed., rev. and enl. by A. F. Johnson. London, Faber and Faber, 1952. 400 p. 84s.

Cambridge Press Title-Pages, 1640-1665: A Pictorial Representation of the Work Done in the First Printing Office in British North America. By Sidney A. Kimber. Takoma Park, Md. (7302 Hilton Ave.), The Author, 1954. \$10.00.

Morris-Drucke und andere Meisterwerke englischer und amerikanischer Privatpressen (Morris Imprints and other Masterpieces of English and American Private Presses. Exhibition of the Gutenberg Museum, March 24, 1954, on the 120th Birthday of William Morris). Mainz, Gutenberg Society, 1954. Free to members.

PI: A Hodge-Podge of the Letters, Papers and Addresses Written during the Last Sixty Years. By Bruce Rogers. Cleveland, World Publishing Co., 1953. 185 p. \$6.00.

I would like to say at the outset that the theme for the present article (as well as for one to be included in a future issue of C&RL, which will deal with "The Printed Picture") was selected solely on the basis of the books to be reviewed. The decision was made before Anglo-American relations had become once again a major point in current world politics. It was also made before I knew that one of the books would turn out such a powerful and direct plea for cultural cooperation of the English speaking world. This is the volume by Lawrence C. Powell.

The first of the three divisions of *The*

Alchemy of Books, a charming and inspiring collection of essays, is entitled "Bookman in Britain." It is largely the fruit of a prolonged stay of the author on a Guggenheim Fellowship for the study of the British antiquarian booktrade and its relation with America. From the piece "A Southwesterner in Scotland" I quote the following: "In this luckless time when ties between countries of different languages are strained to the snapping point, it is the strong bond between the English-speaking people which may prove the one thing that ensures our common survival, and that of lesser nations who look to us for protection." With Powell, this is not, as so often, a convenient phrase, but the expression of a conviction born from a life devoted to the individual's search for books and the wholly natural practice of personal reading. His rediscovery of the shrines of 17th century literature in the war-scarred British Isles is matched by the new discovery of some fresh poetic talent of today of which many of us have probably not heard. It is good, very good, that a professional librarian appears as a personal guide to new literary values.

"Reading and Collecting," the second section, begins with a piece called "A Bookman's Credo", and there is not an article in this section which does not express this credo. In "Librarians as Readers of Books", for instance, one finds not far from each other, the following sentences: "The aspect of librarianship which interests me most is—books. . . . I urge librarians to be on the alert for today's unstandardized books . . . I want to consider reading as a personal therapy, as a tonic . . ." The third section, "People, Books, and Places," is perhaps more intimate and personal even than the earlier portions, and it contains some very fine prose.

The next item on the list, *A History of the Old English Letter Foundries*, carries us back to the early traditions of English printing and typesetting. On reading this new edition of the classic work on English printing type, previously published in the one edition of 1887, one realizes two things: first, how much of today's familiar and current knowledge of English printing history comes from this one source, and second, what a splendid piece of work A. F. Johnson has done as the editor of the new edition.

The book was originally planned by Reed

under the impact of the industrial revolution when there appeared in letter founding "new departures undreamed of by those heroes of the punch and matrix and mould who made her what we found her." The new edition was initiated by Stanley Morison, who realized that the book was sufficiently strong and healthy to bear reissuing for the mid-twentieth century reader and student. A. F. Johnson has done an admirable job of pruning and grafting, whereby he left intact the sound material of the old book (the major portion), changing it only where necessary and, above all, making numerous additions to the text and to the many footnotes and adding many new notes and references. Thus the whole of relevant typographic research of the last half century has been fitted unobtrusively into the fabric of the work. The old classic has been given a new lease on life which ought to extend its usefulness for many years to come. A word might be added about one aspect of this usefulness. Professor William Sale's *Samuel Richardson: Master Printer* (Cornell University Press, reviewed in the July, 1953 issue of C&RL) is a good recent demonstration of the importance of typographic research for the bibliographer. It shows how little one really knows about the equipment of English printers between 1500 and 1800. It is precisely in this area that the new edition of Reed's *Old English Letter Foundries* can become an important starting point for future research.

How much there is still left to be found out about printing history on both sides of the Atlantic is demonstrated in Kimber's *Cambridge Press Title-Pages, 1640-1665*. This work is valuable both in what it accomplishes and in the author's candid demonstration of the difficulties of such a project. The plan sounds simple enough: a facsimile collection of pages from all the publications produced during the first twenty-five years of what is now the United States. I must confess that as editor of successive editions of *The Book in America* I have often dreamed of a pictorial atlas to illustrate the history of the book in the new world. Kimber's is the first important attempt in this direction and as such it fills a conspicuous gap. The work of "just a printer", as he himself describes his qualifications, the *Cambridge Press Title-Pages* is a noteworthy contribution to the literature

of American printing. There are some points which a more experienced bibliographer might have handled a little differently, notably in the selection of material for the comments to each plate. The emphasis here is chiefly on rarity, provenance and present location of the items, somewhat at the expense of the textual, and above all, the typographic significance of each piece. Some interpretation of typographic style is offered, instead, in an all too brief collection of "notes" about types and ornaments at the back of the volume. Also, the content of the captions shows considerable variation in what is emphasized each time and the arrangement of their elements is not consistent. Another question is why the title of the book should stress "Title-Pages" when it reproduces many handbills and broadsides which never had a title page, and when it includes books with the title page lacking and when often, and very properly, pages from the insides of the books are shown.

All in all, however, these shortcomings are not serious enough to interfere with the main purpose of the book which is accomplished skillfully and convincingly. The plan is simple enough. But in its execution the author met innumerable significant difficulties. The location of copies of the earliest Cambridge imprints and the securing of reproduceable copy were major undertakings, and for their successful completion one must be grateful to the author. But even more difficult was the uncertainty which still surrounds a number of these imprints. In some cases it is still by no means decided whether they were printed in England or in Massachusetts. One great merit of the *Cambridge Press Title-Pages* is the clear demonstration of these uncertainties and the author's unassuming attitude about his own contribution. He has shown the need for more thorough studies of the mechanics of cultural communication at a vital point in the joint history of Old England and the New Colonies in North America.

To speak of more recent aspects of these relations, a little publication of the Gutenberg Society in Mainz should be briefly noted. *Morris-Drucke* is the handsomely printed catalog of an exhibition built chiefly around two donations to the Mainz museum, first an important collection of William Morris imprints from a private donor and, second, a set of the "Fifty Books of the Year" 1950, given

by the American Institute of Graphic Arts. To the American observer the particular interest of the publication lies in the manner in which a continental museum has visualized and presented the interrelationship of the private press movement in England and America, and which presses and personalities have been selected as particularly significant.

An excellent view of the further development of these connections, and a first rate biographical document about the dean of American book designers is Bruce Rogers' *PI*. Much of the personal history of Rogers, who is now in his eighties, is a living demonstration of Anglo-American relations. His work for the university presses of Oxford and Cambridge, his close contact with the English Monotype Corporation and his long friendship with leading British bookmen (among them Shaw and Lawrence of Arabia) find colorful reflection in the pages of *PI*. The men he speaks of, incidentally, are of a different group and another generation from those mentioned by Powell in his *Alchemy*, which only goes to prove that these connections transcend the personal and the accidental. But we read also much about some of the great figures in the world of books and printing on this side of the Atlantic. Henry Watson Kent, Fred Goudy, William Edwin Rudge, Frederic Warde—here are some of the names of men no longer with us who come to life here.

A good many of the pieces included in this "Hodge-Podge" have been published previously and some of them will be familiar to some, and others to others. But their collected presentation in chronological order gives this *PI* the quality of an important biographical contribution about one of the great Americans of the twentieth century. His commentary on his own work is always worth reading and one only regrets that circumstances have made BR much more articulate about the products of his middle and later years (the Homer, the Shakespeare, the two Bibles) than about much of his equally significant earlier work in book design.

The prose of Bruce Rogers is something special and rare in its self-satirical humor, its occasional deliberate archaisms, in its use of the gentle pun—but above all in the careful choice of words and the sensitive and dignified phrasing. But what else could one expect from the man who once wrote the following

(to the editor of the *Saturday Review*, October 29, 1927):

The press holds up a mirror to the author in which he may see himself clearly. If the paper, type, and composition are carefully chosen and harmonious, the author sees his work in a new guise. He may feel keen pride or shame. He hears a firmer, more detached voice than his own—an implacably just voice—articulating his words. Everything weak, trivial, arbitrary, or in bad taste that he has written is pointed up and comes out in clear relief. It is at once a lesson and a splendid thing to be beautifully printed.—
Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, New York.

Recent Foreign Books on the Graphic Arts, Bibliography, and Library Science

The very nature of reference work demands that a special compilation of reference books be available for each country. On the other hand, such works as Winchell and Malclès are welcome as additional tools for the reference librarian in countries where languages other than English and French are spoken. The *Handbuch der bibliographischen Nachschlagewerke* (Frankfurt on the Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1954; 258 p.; DM21.50) by Wilhelm Totok and Rolf Weitzel is not as extensive as Winchell and Malclès; but it contains a thoughtful selection of titles and both serves the purposes of the German librarian and amplifies Winchell for the English-speaking librarian.

Titles are arranged in classified order with brief introductory essays preceding each major section. Entries follow the Prussian *Instruktion*, and fully adequate bibliographical information is provided. Whenever necessary there is a brief annotation, but all such annotations are confined to essential information. Critical comment is carefully avoided, and the user must turn to other sources for evaluation of the various work included. There is an author, title, and subject index, the latter confined to an index of the classification and countries (with pertinent subjects listed under each country).

There is a high degree of accuracy in the recording of foreign titles, an important element in any checklist of reference books. A