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A BIBLIOPHILE'S LETTER FROM GREAT BRITAIN

Last year the major bibliographical event took place in October at the Old Bailey when the Crown unsuccessfully prosecuted Penguin Books for publishing an allegedly obscene article—*Lady Chatterley's Lover*. This unexpurgated edition would doubtless have been a bestseller without the publicity of a lengthy trial—by the middle of 1961 more than three million copies had been sold. But in February 1961 Penguin Books published *The Trial of Lady Chatterley*, and this, too, became a bestseller. Students of English literature may well find the trial, taken from the official Old Bailey transcript of evidence and speeches, more interesting than the novel itself which surely was never rated amongst Lawrence's best works.

In June this year the fourth Antiquarian Book Fair was held at the National Book League in London. About forty booksellers were represented. One item offered for sale there at £33 was a copy of the first edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, privately printed, Florence, 1928. Another more valuable item, *Divina Proportione* of Luca Pacioli, printed at Venice in 1509 by Paganini, was offered at £1,050. The appearance of this early alphabet book reminds me that the long awaited *Alphabetum Romanum* of Felice Feliciano from Dr Mardersteig's Officina Bodoni, Verona, is now near completion. I believe it is true to say that in 1955 Giovanni Mardersteig was contemplating the production of a facsimile of the Feliciano of 1463 and that copies may be available before the end of this year. In England William Collins will distribute; in America, Harcourt Brace. There will be three separate editions — English, Italian and German.

James Bain Ltd, an exhibitor at this year's Book Fair, gave their customers a keepsake in the form of a retrospectus of

their firm established in 1816. The *Retrospectus* is unusually well-produced and bears a very simple imprint 'Laverock Press'. Towards the end of 1960 the Laverock Press which belongs to Iain and Susan Bain (not related to the booksellers) produced and privately distributed a monograph on John Sharpe, a 19th century bookseller and publisher of Piccadilly, London. This sort of activity (bibliographical research combined with typographical experiment) is becoming common practice amongst mid-century private presses, and it has little in common with the activities of the private press which John Carter described in his introduction to an exhibition catalogue issued by the Times Bookshop this year (see below).

The Cuckoo Hill Press (David Chambers), which is still in the process of establishing its typographical equipment and style, has already issued, for the benefit of kindred presses, a sampler of Japanese papers complete with information for purchasing.

My own private publishing venture, the Miniature Press, produced one of its few and far between items in 1960—a *Miniature Folio of Private Presses*. The edition, consisting of 100 copies, was distributed free to contributors and bibliophiles. The chief claim to distinction that I would allow this folio of the work of 28 printers is that it contains a folded leaf printed at the Officina Bodoni.

At a meeting of the Double Crown Club in the winter of 1960 members heard a paper read by John Carter on the present status of private presses. Unfortunately, so it seemed to me, Mr Carter's information on the contemporary private press was dated. This may have been due to his failure to grasp the wider implications of purely experimental presses. But the most blatant misunderstanding of private presses appeared in

a note on Glaister's *Glossary of the Book* in which the writer thought that an appendix on contemporary private presses gave too much emphasis of value to what was termed a 'harmless amateur' occupation. The plain fact is that most of the important private presses—and there are several—are the experimental tools of professional designers. There is nothing at all 'amateur' about their products, if indeed they produce anything, and the top professional printers and publishers employ such 'amateurs' in their offices. To describe Giovanni Mardersteig and Will Carter, John

Peters and Christopher Bradshaw, Sem Hartz and Mike Parker (to mention only the first half-dozen names that come to mind) as 'harmless amateurs' does not commend that note to be taken seriously.

There has been much talk of new bibles this year. Jointly the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge issued the New Testament of *The New English Bible* and subsequently Eyre and Spottiswoode issued in paperback form *The Gospel According to John* in the new translation. Although Eyre and Spottiswoode are Her Majesty's printers and hold a royal patent granting them

OCTAVIAN
ROMAN AND ITALIC
CUT IN FOURTEEN
POINT SIZE BY THE
MONOTYPE
CORPORATION
AND DESIGNED BY
WILL CARTER AND
DAVID KINDERSLEY

★

MCMLXI

A private showing of the first trial cutting (by the Monotype Corporation) of a new typeface designed by Will Carter and David Kindersley (slightly enlarged)

JOHN SHARPE
PUBLISHER & BOOKSELLER

PICCADILLY

*A preliminary survey of his activities
in the London Book Trade*

1800 - 1840



WELWYN
THE LAVEROCK PRESS

1960

John Sharpe: title-page from the booklet written and printed by Iain and Susan Bain on a handpress

the right to print the Bible in England, the university presses concerned maintain that they hold a copyright in the new translation and that this copyright overrides the historic patent. Perhaps an interesting lawsuit will follow. Another bible project is the new Nonesuch Bible. Sir Francis Meynell, who celebrated his 70th birthday this year, has designed his second Bible in Ehrhardt type. It is now being set up in part at the Uni-

versity Press, Oxford and in part at the University Press, Cambridge. Whilst his first bible had contemporary illustrations in copperplate by Stephen Gooden, the new bible (Authorized Version as before) will have reproductions of Bernard Salamon's cuts of Biblical subjects.

At Sotheby's in June this year an imperfect copy of the St Alban's Book of *Hawking, Hunting and Heraldry*, 1486 (containing 51

of its original 90 leaves) fetched £2,400. This rare English book has fluctuated in auction value recently. In 1950 it fetched only

£1,600 but in 1947, £2,300. At this same June 1961 auction eighteen typed letters of G. B. Shaw fetched £300. Particularly the



Drawing by Derek Cousins for the Lion & Unicorn Press edition of Chaucer's The Merchant's Tale. The original drawing has a colour background loosely fitting around the figures and the table

value of manuscripts of living or recently deceased authors has greatly increased. The original manuscript of Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall* went for £18 in 1930. In 1960 the MS of E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* fetched £6,500.

The first book of a recently dead author, *Three Stories and Ten Poems* by Ernest Hemingway (Contact Publishing Company, Paris, 1923: 300 copies) inscribed by the author was offered this autumn by Bertram Rota Ltd of London for £265.

Recent developments in the design of typefaces have come from Giovanni Mardersteig at his Officina Bodoni; from John Peters at his Vine Press; from Sem Hartz at his Tuinwijkpers; from Will Carter at his Rampant Lions Press. Will Carter, in collaboration with David Kindersley, is developing a new Roman typeface to be called Octavian. This will be of stronger colour than the revivals of Bembo, Garamond, Fournier, Caslon and Baskerville. Greater use is being made of the medium and stronger coloured faces such as Plantin (Monotype 110 and 113). The revival of Ehrhardt and Ehrhardt Semi-bold by the Monotype Corporation has been particularly successful. The realisation that smaller sizes of typefaces of good colour, when leaded appropriately, are easier to read than larger sizes of a grey face unleaded has become an important factor in the design of books and ephemeral printing.

In the context of the general trend of this letter, emphasising the fact that private presses have never before been in such an ascendancy and that the trends of design are largely in their hands, it is interesting to note that only 40 publishers are represented in the National Book League's exhibition of British book design for 1960 and amongst these are the following private presses: Merrion, Rampant Lions, Stanbrook Abbey, and Vine.

In April this year an exhibition of private press books was staged at the Times Bookshop. All exhibits were produced in this

country between 1757 and 1960. The opening ceremony was performed by Sir Francis Meynell whose Nonesuch Press was established in 1923. The exhibition catalogue, although appearing to be meticulously compiled, left some room for criticism of its comments on certain presses. For instance, the Nonesuch Press is followed by the Fortune Press which was established 'c. 1925'. We may wonder why the *circa* since its founder and sole owner, John Gaton, is still active. We may also wonder at its specialisation 'in poetry, fiction and scholarly works in all fields.' This seems a bit wide to be called specialisation. Also it may not seem too accurate if and when the list of publications is known.

Special issues from the University Press, Cambridge and from the Lion and Unicorn Press (of the Royal College of Art) are usually of both bibliographical and typographical interest. Since 1930 the Printer to the University at Cambridge has, with the exception of the war years, issued Christmas books for his friends in printing and publishing. All issues are for private distribution and up to 1938 their editions never exceeded 150 copies. From Cambridge the Christmas 1960 book was a memoir: *Talbot Baines Reed, Author, Bibliographer, Typefounder*, by Stanley Morison. In 80 pages the author provides something of the family background, Reed's contributions to *Boy's Own Paper*, his administration of the Fann Street Foundry, the bibliographical importance of his *History of the Old English Letter Foundries*, and his association with the Bibliographical Society, London. From the Lion and Unicorn Press recent issues include:

A Newe Booke of Copies, 1574, a facsimile of an Elizabethan writing book from the Bodleian Library, Oxford, edited by Berthold Wolpe.

The Merchant's Tale, Neville Coghill's translation into modern English from Chaucer with exceptionally good illustrations by Derek Cousins.

English as She Is Spoke, a Portuguese-

English phrase book first published in 1869, illustrated from a Portuguese sketch book of Edward Bawden.

Elkin Mathews Ltd, the booksellers at Takeley in Hertfordshire, recently arranged to distribute books from the Gravesend Press, Kentucky.

Joseph Graves, the owner of this press, died in 1960. Before his death he wrote and had produced at the Pickering Press, New Jersey, *The Gravesend Press, a bibliographical confession with woodcuts by Fritz Kredel*. This describes his ten years as a private printer-publisher, his associations with Victor Hammer who brought to the press a manuscript by Rudolf Koch, Fritz Kredel and R. Hunter Middleton. Mrs Lucy Graves, who distributed the *Confession*, also worked at the press executing much of the binding. The few books and ephemeral pieces which Graves produced between 1949 and 1959 entitle him

to be ranked with John Fass of New York and with John Peters and Peter Foster of Cambridge.

Since 1958, when Thomas Rae issued *Private Press Books*, bibliographical notes on new productions have regularly appeared in annual checklists. The current list, prepared by Rae and Roderick Cave, contains 111 books from 71 presses (Private Libraries Association, Pinner, Mx.).

I hope my readers will forgive the sketchiness of these brief remarks. It seemed better to mention a number of bibliographical affairs rather than dwell on a few of them. Even now I have left out entirely many interesting events and developments especially where publishing and graphic art come into a common harness. This subject is touched on with the mention of Derek Cousins but a detailed assessment is wanting (see reproduction on page 81).

KARL GLADT (WIEN)

GRILLPARZERS HANDZEICHNUNGEN

Doppelbegabungen in der Welt der Genialen sind für die Persönlichkeitsgeschichte stets interessant. Goethe zeigte auch als Zeichner überdurchschnittliches Vermögen, und Adalbert Stifter oder Gottfried Keller waren zeitweise wenigstens sich selbst kaum im klaren, welcher Kunstgattung sie sich zuwenden sollten. Wie ihre Dichtungen sind auch ihre graphischen Darstellungen besprochen und veröffentlicht worden. Man hat Vorwurf und Bildgestaltung zu ihren poetischen Arbeiten in Beziehung gesetzt und ist dadurch in der Erkenntnis der schöpferischen Persönlichkeit einen Schritt weiter gekommen.

Höchst seltsam ist die Tatsache, daß Franz Grillparzers Handzeichnungen – 28 an der Zahl –, die vor 83 Jahren von der

Wiener Stadtbibliothek übernommen wurden, bisher keine Auswertung erfahren haben. Im Übernahmeprotokoll, das sämtliche Gegenstände, Bücher, Manuskripte, Briefe und dergleichen des Dichternachlasses aufzählt, war die Mappe mit den Zeichnungen, deren Inhalt allerdings seither noch ergänzt werden konnte, gar nicht erwähnt. Wohl hat Reinhold Backmann, der August Sauers Editionsarbeit fortsetzte, in der Gesamtausgabe wie in den Grillparzer-Studien¹ u.a. die Skizzen zum «Goldenen Vließ» veröffentlicht. Aber er benutzte sie nur als

¹ Reinhold Backmann: «Vom Werdegang des 'Goldenen Vließes', Versuch einer Analyse seines Entstehungsprozesses», in: «Grillparzer-Studien», hg. von Oskar Katann, Wien 1924, S. 130ff.