The Crystal Goblet

SIXTEEN ESSAYS ON TYPOGRAPHY

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

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IN THE EARLY NINETEEN-THIRTIES, in the small but lively
world of typographic learning, there was some grieving over
the disappearance from title-pages of the name of Paul Beaujon,
who had achieved a reputation by works of research, par-
ticularly one which tracked down the origin of the 'Garamond'
type. I was the chief mourner; having created the pseudonymous
'Beaujon' out of whole cloth, I had been deriving great pleasure
from the success with which his name, attached to articles first
in the *Fleuron* and later elsewhere, had deceived those who were
not prepared to believe that a woman could write anything
worth reading about type.

But Beaujon's capacity to write had got me into an office job
which left no time for researches in the British Museum or else-
where. You may read, if you penetrate so far into this book, the
tale of how the London Company that engaged that mysterious
Frenchman, sight-unseen, to edit its learned house journal, *The
Monotype Recorder*, found that it had acquired the services of an
American disciple of the late Henry Lewis Bullen, who in turn
had been a friend and disciple of T. L. de Vinne. Both those
masters had dedicated their scholarship to the service and
inspiration of the printing trade — in the days when Americans
were not yet calling it their 'graphic arts industry'.

I am not saying that Mr Beaujon committed suicide in order
that his *alter ego* B.W. might be free to harangue audiences of

printers' apprentices, art students, hard-working layout men, members of the Printers' Managers and Overseers' Association, librarians, print-ignorant laymen, and others to whom the essays in this book are addressed. Like Enoch Soames, he will one day be seen again in the British Museum. But none of his writings appears in this book.

What you *will* find here is a collection made by Mr Henry Jacob of certain articles and speeches of mine in which I have tried to pass on, to people who seemed to need it, the help that I have derived from moments in conversation with most of the masters of typography of this century. I mean the sort of help that you never get from plugging away at textbooks or learning details the hard way at the drawing-board or type-case. I can think of three people — Bruce Rogers, T. M. Cleland and Stanley Morison — whose most casual *obiter dicta* over the coffee-cups may whisk you to the top of Mount Pisgah for a view of that whole blessed borderland (not to say buffer state) that lies between the empire of Letters on the one side and that of what we nowadays call Art on the other. I can think of others — Bullen, Updike, and that inimitable octogenarian J. P. Thorp come first to mind — whose utterance of ten words in parenthesis over lunch could disperse any amount of technical mist and give you the feeling that the whole business of communicating ideas through the graphic word is real and exciting. These and many other people will be ventriloquizing in the pages that you have here; and so unselfconscious were their off-hand utterances at the time of notation, that each of them, at some later date, innocently congratulated me on having hit the nail on the head in a printed article.

I understand that Mr Jacob's selection was influenced by the

number of thumb-prints, or other evidences of hard wear, that he was able to find on various clippings and fugitive pamphlets that had been carried about in the pockets of teachers of printing, foremen of composing rooms and others whose thumbs bore traces of printer's ink. To a writer there could be no more gratifying kind of 'printing' than that which such thumbs transfer to paper.

On looking through the resulting book, I am conscious that most of what it says has been summed up in the opening pages — a rewriting of a lecture to what is now known as the Society of Typographic Designers, formerly the British Typographers Guild. But it is the sort of thing which has to be said over again in other terms to many other kinds of people who in the nature of their work have to deal with the putting of printed words on paper — and who, for one reason or another, are in danger of becoming as fascinated by the intricacies of its techniques as birds are supposed to be by the eye of a serpent.

Hence, this is not a textbook of typography of printing. To the layman, the man who has only the vaguest idea of how the little black marks ever got there on the page, it may be no more than a chance to listen-in while one voice, and the echoes of other and wiser voices, say things over the clink of coffee-cups which indicate why so many intelligent people nowadays do bother to hail different designs of type by name as if they were ships or horses, and why one can say that it is not all a simple matter of decanting the wine of Meaning into any sufficiently transparent tumbler which the nearest printer happens to be able to hold out for it. Thus the members of the Library Association, to whom the paper on 'The Design of Books' was addressed, are people who must have some practical and even

technical language in which to argue about all sorts of examples of crank or experimentalist design which crop up in children's books and elsewhere. The P. M. & O. Association to which I have referred needed — and called upon me for — the hard-headed arguments on the relation of design to management which begin on page 49. Working compositors helped me to get some realism into the articles in which I deplored some of the effects on those proud craftsmen of the emergence in this century of the professional print designer and his little brother, the amateur layout man. Mr Jacob could not, and I would not excise various passages which date.

If there is a word in this book which overlaps what you can find in the textbooks or learned monographs, blame the compiler. But if there is a sentence in it that cannot in its context make some sort of sense to the average citizen who knows nothing about printing, I shall be the one to reproach. The good citizen is supposed to feel some responsibility for the health of industrial design in his country; the literate man is expected to think with grateful interest of that invention which turned literacy from a separate profession into Everyman's birthright. Well, the history of industrial design begins with medieval goldsmiths cutting model letters for printers' types; and among all its present-day manifestations none is more significant than that which has been going on, literally under our noses, on the printed page.   B.W.

AN APPROACH TO TYPOGRAPHY

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THE CRYSTAL GOBLET
OR
PRINTING SHOULD BE INVISIBLE

★

IMAGINE THAT YOU HAVE before you a flagon of wine. You may choose your own favourite vintage for this imaginary demonstration, so that it be a deep shimmering crimson in colour. You have two goblets before you. One is of solid gold, wrought in the most exquisite patterns. The other is of crystal-clear glass, thin as a bubble, and as transparent. Pour and drink; and according to your choice of goblet, I shall know whether or not you are a connoisseur of wine. For if you have no feelings about wine one way or the other, you will want the sensation of drinking the stuff out of a vessel that may have cost thousands of pounds; but if you are a member of that vanishing tribe, the amateurs of fine vintages, you will choose the crystal, because everything about it is calculated to *reveal* rather than to hide the beautiful thing which it was meant to *contain*.

Bear with me in this long-winded and fragrant metaphor; for you will find that almost all the virtues of the perfect wine-glass have a parallel in typography. There is the long, thin stem that obviates fingerprints on the bowl. Why? Because no cloud must come between your eyes and the fiery heart of the liquid. Are not the margins on book pages similarly meant to obviate the necessity of fingering the type-page? Again: the glass is colourless or at the most only faintly tinged in the bowl, because the connoisseur judges wine partly by its colour and is

impatient of anything that alters it. There are a thousand mannerisms in typography that are as impudent and arbitrary as putting port in tumblers of red or green glass! When a goblet has a base that looks too small for security, it does not matter how cleverly it is weighted; you feel nervous lest it should tip over. There are ways of setting lines of type which may work well enough, and yet keep the reader subconsciously worried by the fear of 'doubling' lines, reading three words as one, and so forth.

Now the man who first chose glass instead of clay or metal to hold his wine was a 'modernist' in the sense in which I am going to use that term. That is, the first thing he asked of this particular object was not '*How should it look?*' but '*What must it do?*' and to that extent all good typography is modernist.

Wine is so strange and potent a thing that it has been used in the central ritual of religion in one place and time, and attacked by a virago with a hatchet in another. There is only one thing in the world that is capable of stirring and altering men's minds to the same extent, and that is the coherent expression of thought. That is man's chief miracle, unique to man. There is no 'explanation' whatever of the fact that I can make arbitrary sounds which will lead a total stranger to think my own thought. It is sheer magic that I should be able to hold a one-sided conversation by means of black marks on paper with an unknown person half-way across the world. Talking, broadcasting, writing, and printing are all quite literally forms of *thought transference*, and it is this ability and eagerness to transfer and receive the contents of the mind that is almost alone responsible for human civilization.

If you agree with this, you will agree with my one main idea,

i.e. that the most important thing about printing is that it con-
veys thought, ideas, images, from one mind to other minds.
This statement is what you might call the front door of the
science of typography. Within lie hundreds of rooms; but
unless you start by assuming that *printing is meant to convey
specific and coherent ideas*, it is very easy to find yourself in the
wrong house altogether.

Before asking what this statement leads to, let us see what it
does not necessarily lead to. If books are printed in order to be
read, we must distinguish readability from what the optician
would call legibility. A page set in 14-pt. Bold Sans is, according
to the laboratory tests, more 'legible' than one set in 11-pt.
Baskerville. A public speaker is more 'audible' in that sense
when he bellows. But a good speaking voice is one which is
inaudible *as* a voice. It is the transparent goblet again! I need
not warn you that if you begin listening to the inflections and
speaking rhythms of a voice from a platform, you are falling
asleep. When you listen to a song in a language you do not
understand, part of your mind actually does fall asleep, leaving
your quite separate aesthetic sensibilities to enjoy themselves
unimpeded by your reasoning faculties. The fine arts do that;
but that is not the purpose of printing. Type well used is in-
visible *as* type, just as the perfect talking voice is the unnoticed
vehicle for the transmission of words, ideas.

We may say, therefore, that printing may be delightful for
many reasons, but that it is important, first and foremost, as a
means of doing something. That is why it is mischievous to call
any printed piece a work of art, especially fine art: because that
would imply that its first purpose was to exist as an expression
of beauty for its own sake and for the delectation of the senses.

Calligraphy can almost be considered a fine art nowadays, because its primary economic and educational purpose has been taken away; but printing in English will not qualify as an art until the present English language no longer conveys ideas to future generations, and until printing itself hands its usefulness to some yet unimagined successor.

There is no end to the maze of practices in typography, and this idea of printing as a conveyor is, at least in the minds of all the great typographers with whom I have had the privilege of talking, the one clue that can guide you through the maze. Without this essential humility of mind, I have seen ardent designers go more hopelessly wrong, make more ludicrous mistakes out of an excessive enthusiasm, than I could have thought possible. And with this clue, this purposiveness in the back of your mind, it is possible to do the most unheard-of things, and find that they justify you triumphantly. It is not a waste of time to go to the simple fundamentals and reason from them. In the flurry of your individual problems, I think you will not mind spending half an hour on one broad and simple set of ideas involving abstract principles.

I once was talking to a man who designed a very pleasing advertising type which undoubtedly all of you have used. I said something about what artists think about a certain problem, and he replied with a beautiful gesture: 'Ah, madam, we artists do not think — we *feel*!' That same day I quoted that remark to another designer of my acquaintance, and he, being less poetically inclined, murmured: 'I'm not *feeling* very well today, I *think*!' He was right, he did think; he was the thinking sort; and that is why he is not so good a painter, and to my mind ten times better as a typographer and type designer than

the man who instinctively avoided anything as coherent as a reason.

I always suspect the typographic enthusiast who takes a printed page from a book and frames it to hang on the wall, for I believe that in order to gratify a sensory delight he has mutilated something infinitely more important. I remember that T. M. Cleland, the famous American typographer, once showed me a very beautiful layout for a Cadillac booklet involving decorations in colour. He did not have the actual text to work with in drawing up his specimen pages, so he had set the lines in Latin. This was not only for the reason that you will all think of, if you have seen the old typefoundries' famous *Quousque Tandem* copy (i.e. that Latin has few descenders and thus gives a remarkably even line). No, he told me that originally he had set up the dullest 'wording' that he could find (I dare say it was from *Hansard*), and yet he discovered that the man to whom he submitted it would start reading and making comments on the text. I made some remark on the mentality of Boards of Directors, but Mr Cleland said, 'No: you're wrong; if the reader had not been practically forced to read — if he had not seen those words suddenly imbued with glamour and significance — then the layout would have been a failure. Setting it in Italian or Latin is only an easy way of saying "This is not the text as it will appear".'

Let me start my specific conclusions with book typography, because that contains all the fundamentals, and then go on to a few points about advertising.

The book typographer has the job of erecting a window between the reader inside the room and that landscape which is the author's words. He may put up a stained-glass window of

marvellous beauty, but a failure as a window; that is, he may use some rich superb type like text gothic that is something to be looked at, not *through*. Or he may work in what I call transparent or invisible typography. I have a book at home, of which I have no visual recollection whatever as far as its typography goes; when I think of it, all I see is the Three Musketeers and their comrades swaggering up and down the streets of Paris. The third type of window is one in which the glass is broken into relatively small leaded panes; and this corresponds to what is called 'fine printing' today, in that you are at least conscious that there is a window there, and that someone has enjoyed building it. That is not objectionable, because of a very important fact which has to do with the psychology of the subconscious mind. This is that the mental eye focuses *through* type and not *upon* it. The type which, through any arbitrary warping of design or excess of 'colour', gets in the way of the mental picture to be conveyed, is a bad type. Our subconsciousness is always afraid of blunders (which illogical setting, tight spacing and too-wide unleaded lines can trick us into), of boredom, and of officiousness. The running headline that keeps shouting at us, the line that looks like one long word, the capitals jammed together without hair-spaces — these mean subconscious squinting and loss of mental focus.

And if what I have said is true of book printing, even of the most exquisite limited editions, it is fifty times more obvious in advertising, where the one and only justification for the purchase of space is that you are conveying a message — that you are implanting a desire, straight into the mind of the reader. It is tragically easy to throw away half the reader-interest of an advertisement by setting the simple and compelling argument

in a face which is uncomfortably alien to the classic reasonableness of the book-face. Get attention as you will by your headline, and make any pretty type pictures you like if you are sure that the copy is useless as a means of selling goods; but if you are happy enough to have really good copy to work with, I beg you to remember that thousands of people pay hard-earned money for the privilege of reading quietly set book-pages, and that only your wildest ingenuity can stop people from reading a really interesting text.

Printing demands a humility of mind, for the lack of which many of the fine arts are even now floundering in self-conscious and maudlin experiments. There is nothing simple or dull in achieving the transparent page. Vulgar ostentation is twice as easy as discipline. When you realize that ugly typography never effaces itself, you will be able to capture beauty as the wise men capture happiness by aiming at something else. The 'stunt typographer' learns the fickleness of rich men who hate to read. Not for them are long breaths held over serif and kern, they will not appreciate your splitting of hair-spaces. Nobody (save the other craftsmen) will appreciate half your skill. But you may spend endless years of happy experiment in devising that crystalline goblet which is worthy to hold the vintage of the human mind.

THE NATURE OF THE BOOK

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ACCORDING TO CONTEXT, the English word 'book' may
denote anything from a concrete object of a certain recogniz-
able form (e.g. 'a handsomely bound book') to a literary work
of a certain minimum length (e.g. 'a book that has been
translated into six languages'). The word 'book' and its cognates
in other Teutonic languages may or may not derive from a
word meaning 'beech' or 'tablets of beech wood', but the
earliest Teutonic form *boks*, in the plural, meant 'writing tab-
lets', presumably slabs or billets of wood inscribed, or ready to
be inscribed, with runic symbols. The Old English form *boc*,
even in its early and now obsolete sense of 'written deed,
charter', at least referred to a document rather than to the mere
material on which the document was written. Nevertheless, the
Teutonic words for 'book' can still be applied to a volume of
blank leaves, and Dr Johnson's attempt to define 'book' simply
as a kind of material object ('a volume in which we read or
write') would sound reasonable to any English craftsman-
bookbinder, and to some book collectors. On the other hand,
the Latin word *liber*, though it originally meant 'bark or rind'
(of a tree, or of the papyrus plant, as a writing material), soon
took on the almost exclusive meaning of 'literary work, trea-
tise', and the entirely different words, *tabellae*, *pugillares*, were
used for the sets of tablets and the blank parchment booklets
that served the ancient Romans as notebooks and copybooks.

The Oxford English Dictionary brings the English word 'book' into line with *liber*, *biblion*, etc, by excluding the blank book from the general definition of book as 'a written or printed treatise or series of treatises, occupying several sheets of paper or other substance fastened together so as to compose a material whole'. That nearly covers the great variety of physical forms in which books have been set forth and read in different countries at different times, though 'fastened together' would not strictly apply to the oldest form of all — the series of clay tablets, enclosed in a labelled container, on which the Babylonians set forth literary works by impressing characters in the moist clay with a wedge-shaped tool. Books have been written or incised on dried strips of palm-leaf lashed together with a thong (India), and on plates of metal (Burma), and on birchbark. The modern printed book, like its medieval manuscript prototype, is made up of separate sheets folded to form leaves, with the quires or gatherings of leaves sewn together at the back ready for the outer binding. A sheet (whether of paper or vellum) folded once makes two large leaves or four pages 'folio'; a second fold gives the smaller but still impressive 'quarto' format, and so on.

The word 'volume' (from *volumen*, scroll) is a reminder that in classic times, and as long as pagan literature continued to be read in the Christian era, the normal form of the book was the scroll — a continuous band of papyrus, attached at each end to a stiff roller. The narrow parallel columns of text passed under the reader's eyes as he unwound the scroll with one hand and wound it with the other hand around the outer roller. Papyrus was made from the pith of the papyrus reed, which then grew abundantly in the Nile. Thin strips of the fibrous substance were

laid side by side; a second layer was laid down with the strips at right angles, and by some art now lost the two layers were so gummed and pressed together as to make a very flexible writing material. The sheets, each some sixteen inches wide, were pasted edge to edge to form blank rolls of more or less standard length. If the text fell short of that length the scribe could cut off the extra material, and if the text was too long he could paste on an extra sheet. Some Egyptian scrolls were more than a hundred feet long and as tall as sixteen inches, but the normal length of about twenty-six feet, and the normal height of six to nine inches, took into account the reader's convenience in handling the scroll. The reverse side of the material was normally left blank. Prose columns were about thirty-eight characters wide, and the lines were written in capital letters without the use of punctuation or spaces between words. *Libri* came to mean not only written works but also divisions of a long work into easily handled volumes, whence the 'books' of the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, etc. But the books of the Bible began, and can still be thought of, as separate books in every sense.

The ancestor of the scroll book was probably the inscribed banner of papyrus hung from the walls of the Egyptian temple. In one respect the scroll form stands nearer to the painted or carved public inscription than any modern book: it could, if necessary, be wholly opened up for simultaneous inspection by a number of people, or laid partly open on a wide lectern (reading shelf) so as to expose twelve or more parallel columns — a convenience in public recitation. But the essential characteristic of the book, then as now, was its portability — the fact that it could be carried about, possessed, enjoyed, and decorated to the private owner's taste. It is easy to see how the brittleness

of papyrus justified the form of the scroll, and why there was no transition as there was in the Far East from the scroll proper to the *orihon* or pleated ribbon of tough rag paper that could be stab-fastened at the back to make a book of double leaves. What is less easy for modern readers to understand is the fact that parchment, a much tougher material made from animal skins (including the fine 'vellum' made from calf-skin) was more or less despised in classic times. The *codex* form of book, our familiar 'bound book' of leaves, was made practicable by the coming of parchment before the second century B.C., but the *volumen* remained the preferred form until the fourth century of the Christian era; so much so that a will leaving all the testator's books to a certain heir could be interpreted as referring only to scrolls, not to mere pamphlets and other items in the parchment *codex* form. The only survival of the *volumen* in modern use is the manuscript Scroll of the Law which is deposited in the Ark of every synagogue. Like the scrolls of the ancient Hebrews, it is written on parchment.

The *codex* form may have evolved from the notebook of classic times, a set of tablets normally made of wood coated with wax to serve as a kind of slate. By the first century of our era notebooks and booklets were being made of parchment, but it was not until the fourth century that the scroll — and the pagan literature with which that form was so firmly associated — gave way to the *codex* form, which the Christians strongly preferred. Since the *codex* or modern form uses both sides of the material, it can accommodate twice as many words as the scroll. An abnormally long or tall scroll was clumsy and fatiguing to the reader's hand; a bound book can be very thick without being unmanageable. Above all, the latter form is far

more suitable for quick reference to any particular passage. The fourth-century *Codex Sinaiticus* of the Bible has four columns to the page — a carry-over from the scroll tradition of narrow parallel columns.

In the Roman publishing office, the 'plant', the equivalent of the modern battery of composing- and printing-machines, consisted of human beings purchased and trained to write rapidly to the dictation of an overseer. After the fall of Rome, the responsibility for making and multiplying books passed to the monastic scriptoria. Functionalists of the dark ages gave us our present means of visually indicating the sense of SOIASKEDA-SMITH as 'So I asked a smith', or 'A. Smith', as the case may be. To the Benedictine scribes we owe the most efficient of all aids to legibility, the dual (a, A) alphabet with nearly all the minuscule letters clearly differentiated from the capital forms. The ancestor of the modern printer's 'lower-case' roman was the minuscule standardized throughout the empire of Charlemagne by the English poet and scholar, Alcuin of York.

From the tenth century onward, a new and incalculably important writing-material was finding its way into western Europe: rag paper, which is almost as durable as parchment, much cheaper, and not limited in quantity by the availability of animal skins. Above all, paper was ideally suited for the multiplication of images or messages by impression from an inked relief surface, i.e. printing.

The earliest printed books (*circa* 1455) in Europe were scarcely distinguishable from the manuscripts of the period; but the knowledge that they were mechanical copies struck off from the same printing-surface brought about a profound and permanent change in the whole notion of what constituted a book.

For the first time it became possible to think of two copies (or two thousand) as 'the same book' in more than the literary sense. Henceforth two copies could be word for word, point for point, interchangeably 'the same'. The assumption that they can be so is the foundation of editorial scholarship, and it came from the Far East.

The traditional date for the invention of paper in China is A.D. 105. Printing (from wood-blocks) evolved in China from the use of seals for the authentication of documents and stamps for multiplying charms. The earliest printed book of which any copy has survived is the Buddhist *Diamond Sutra* (A.D. 868), a scroll sixteen feet long formed by pasting printed sheets of paper end to end. Unlike any of the earliest European printed books, it bears a publisher's imprint and date. The only extant copy is in the British Museum, which also possesses the oldest-known copy (A.D. 949) of a printed book of folded pages — another Buddhist work, in which the long strip of the scroll has been pleated into the oblong shape of the modern book.

During the Han dynasty, the Confucian classics had been cut in stone and publicly displayed in such a way that they could be copied by anyone, even an illiterate, without the slightest risk of variance; that is, by taking paper 'rubbings' from the incised stone tablets. That method of copying texts had the merit of being infallible; once the master-inscription was certified as correct, any copy rubbed off from it would be a mechanically true copy. In A.D. 932 it was proposed to revise and publish the Confucian classics by a method which was apparently thought of as a cheap substitute for the stone tablet, and one which had that same supreme advantage of eliminating the risk of error in copying: namely, printing from wood-

blocks cut in reverse. Printing was being fostered by the scholars for the sake of its accuracy, with scarcely any reference to its speed as a copying method.

Printing, by the oriental method of taking rubbed impressions from wood-blocks, was being practised in Europe for some generations before the invention, midway of the fifteenth century, of what we now think of as printing — with a press and movable metal type. From the making of single wood-cut prints, such as an image of St. Christopher, and of *sets* of similar printed things (playing cards), it was an easy step to the primitive block-book. This cheap and relatively ephemeral sort of publication combined wood-cut illustrations with texts similarly cut in relief with a knife. But this method was never used for the production of important scholarly works. The fact that the wood-block was practically unalterable, and thus a safe way of authenticating an approved text, had no such weight with the medieval European scholars as it had had in the Far East.

The printing-press, which makes the copy by mechanically distributing even pressure all over the inked relief surface, is a western invention. Round about 1440 Johann Gutenberg of Mainz was engaged in experiments which presumably involved an adaptation of the principle of the wine-press, and some means of casting separate metal types with characters formed by engraving metal punches (model letters) in relief. There was also the need to create a new kind of ink viscous enough to be used on metal. Movable type had been used in China and Korea, but the Chinese system of ideographic writing, which requires as many as forty thousand different characters-for-words, had sterilized the invention. The most important of all western inventions, that of alphabetical writing, made the task

of the first European typefounders relatively easy. From a few fragments it is possible to conjecture that Gutenberg's interest was in multiplying cheap school-books such as the Latin grammar of Donatus. Before 1450 Gutenberg returned from Strassburg to Mainz, where the new invention received the backing of a man with financial power and a bold mind, Johann Fust. The first production of the partnership was a folio Vulgate of forty-two lines to the column. It was issued before the year 1456, both in vellum and in paper copies. The kind of angular black letter favoured by the northern scribes lent itself peculiarly well to cutting in metal, and at first glance the earliest printed books could be mistaken for manuscripts. Fust and Schoeffer, however, were not trying to pass off forgeries. In their superb Psalter in 1457 the colophon (publisher's postscript) boasts that the entire book, coloured decorated initials and all, was produced 'by the ingenious invention of printing and stamping . . . without any ploughing with a pen'. It is one of the handsomest volumes ever printed, and is the first in Europe to bear an imprint and a date.

Books printed before the year 1500 are called incunabula, that is, products of the 'cradle' years of the new art. With the exception of books of private devotions, they are in the larger formats, folio and quarto. The pocket edition was created in 1501 by Aldus Manutius, the most influential printer-publisher of all times. His press at Venice was a centre of the New Learning. While the humanist scholars were fostering the printing of books predominantly for the sake of the accuracy of the method, the friars and clergy were clamouring for books in the mother tongues and in everyday, as distinct from classical, Latin; and to this latter group the possibility of swift

simultaneous multiplication, for an ever-expanding popular market, was the outstanding advantage of the new method. One can only conjecture how many editions of popular booklets, primers, etc, were printed and read to pieces before the year 1500. As printing spread, literacy spread, and the increase of books in the vernacular eventually killed Latin as an international language.

The rudimentary title-page, giving the name and author of the book on what had been one of the blank leaves at the front, appeared as early as 1470, but the complete modern title-page with the name, date and place of publication was not firmly established until the early sixteenth century. Other pages which the publisher classes as 'prelims' — the half-title, the table of contents, etc — developed as the market for printed books widened to take in those who were not professional literates. Books with plates separately printed from copper engravings became common in the sixteenth century. Religious wars and censorship in the seventeenth century brought down the standards of book production. In that century the ephemeral book or pamphlet merged into the earliest form of printed periodical, and since that day the regular readers of periodicals (newspapers and magazines) have greatly outnumbered the readers of books.

In the eighteenth century, particularly in France and England, the cult of the 'fine edition' spread amongst the upper classes, but the possibility of providing cheap books for the masses was first opened up by the early nineteenth-century inventions of the paper-making machine and the power-driven printing-machine (1812). Although pretentious 'gift book' editions abounded in the nineteenth century, the main emphasis was on

rapid multiplication. The leather binding gave way to the cloth-board case, and the invention, in the second half of the nineteenth century, of chemically-treated wood-pulp paper provides another milestone in the history of the book, since modern book paper is of a sort which disintegrates with the passing of time. The fine editions printed by William Morris at the Kelmscott Press 1891-6 revived interest in the aesthetics of the physical book, and in more recent times the design and typography of the trade edition has attracted the attention it deserves.

The ambivalence of the word 'book' continues to embarrass the lexicographers. In the casual question 'Is that X's new book that you have in your hand?' the two extremes of meaning meet and are trickily elided. 'That' (concrete object) has been recognized as a book by its physical shape without reference to the contents, and the question is whether that book (bound volume) is or is not a copy (one of many indistinguishable printed and bound examples) of any edition of a particular literary work which the speaker refers to as 'X's new book'. The literary work is something immaterial which can be transferred from one physical container to another without losing its identity. A bundle of typewritten sheets, or a stack of gramophone records for the blind, can be said to 'contain' X's new book. But the printed and bound volume represents the particular kind of material container that the author had in mind from the moment he was sure that the thing he was writing was not a short story, not an essay, not anything that could be read through in ten minutes, but 'a book': that is to say, the sort of treatise which can be most efficiently read or consulted in book form. Hence it is natural for the reader to say 'That *is* X's new book' when the object referred to is any bound copy

of any edition of the specified work — even though two different editions (e.g. British and American) may differ in title, in format (relative size and shape), in orthography, in typographic design, in the treatment of the binding or case, in 'style' (in the printer's sense: consistent use of punctuation signs, capitals, etc) and in other respects. More important than any of these physical differences are the two main facts: (*a*) that each edition was made specially to convey that particular work to its potential readers, and (*b*) that the writer himself, or whoever was responsible for the contents, was influenced from the start by his knowledge of the conventional shape of the physical book and his desire that the work should eventually appear in that recognizable shape, though it might first be published piecemeal in consecutive numbers of a periodical. Even when the contents consist of poems or other works which have appeared separately, or of letters that were not written for publication, someone has had to 'make them into a book' in the literary sense; and that involves two references to the form of the physical book. In the first place, the work would not have been thought of as a 'book' unless there had been enough matter to justify publication in book form; a volume of less than sixteen leaves or thirty-two pages, including those which the publisher calls 'prelims', would have to be bulked out with blank leaves for the binder's sake, and even then would be thought of as a booklet rather than as a book. The public generally has some rough idea of the minimum number of pages, or the minimum thickness, to be expected of any particular kind of treatise or compilation that is published as a book. In the second place, the compiler or editor is to some extent guided by his knowledge of the form of the printed book and the way

it is handled by its readers. That knowledge helps him to decide, for example, whether an editorial comment should go on the same page as a footnote, or at the back of the volume as an appendix, or be incorporated in the preface. If illustrations are essential or desirable, the editorial work of selecting the subjects may be influenced by physical considerations, e.g. whether it is possible to use illustrative 'plates' (leaves or sheets printed separately and inserted by the binder) or whether the pictures must be 'in text' (blocks and type printed together in one forme).

Thus the prevailing notion of how a physical book of any kind ought to look exercises some influence over the writer or editor. The degree to which the specific contents influences the physical form varies according to the circumstances of publication. At one end of the scale one finds the publisher's 'series', e.g. of cheap reprints such as Everyman's Library, where works of fiction and non-fiction are given the same standard format and typographic style: though even here the size of type and the amount of leading (channel of white space between the lines) may differ slightly from one 'title' (separate work) to another, according to whether it is desired to bulk out an exiguous text or to condense an abnormally long one. At the other end of the scale is the 'fine edition' designed to be the ideally suitable and pleasant embodiment of that particular literary work. In between lies the normal trade edition. ('Edition' means any number of copies printed from the same setting of type.) Even before the trade publisher has read the manuscript and calculated the number of words, he has a clear idea of the format, and some general idea of the maximum and minimum bulk or thickness which the volume should have in a given format. That much is known in advance from the general

nature of the contents, e.g. whether it is a novel, biography, book of verse, etc. The work of designing the trade edition consists first of all of making the volume look like the *kind* of book that it is, and secondly of giving the specific work every advantage which the publisher can afford to give it in the way of special design and treatment. The primary distinction is between books for reading and books for reference: in the latter group the designer is permitted to use bold type, abnormally small type, parallel columns and other devices which would be offensive in a volume meant for continuous reading.

Anyone connected with what is called the world of books will admit that no two trades or professions in that world use the word 'book' in precisely the same sense; that is, with the same degree of emphasis as between the abstract ('I am writing a book') and the concrete (e.g. the craftsman-bookbinder's 'I am rebinding an old book'). The literary critic's, the publisher's, the printer's, the bookseller's, and the librarian's senses shade one into another, but are sufficiently different to cause no misunderstandings. Similarly, the general term 'book-lover' can be stretched far enough in one direction to cover the omnivorous reader who is tolerant of the lowest standards of book production, and far enough in the other direction to include the book collector who amasses miniature books as such, or fine limited editions irrespective of their subjects. Either extremist is likely to exert an unhealthy influence both on the state of letters and on the general standards of book production. Where there is no market save for cheap mass-produced books, literature suffers; when too much public attention is paid to the freakish or extra-luxurious book, the normal trade edition receives less attention and criticism than it deserves.

THE DESIGN OF BOOKS

★

IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE to bring together some facts from the past, and from that part of the immediate past which we think of as 'the present', that would help us to envisage possible changes in the appearance, or price, or physical behaviour of books during the decades to come — say, during the middle-aged man's lifetime. There is a practical reason for doing this, and the exercise will be no less practical if the possibilities fail to appear as probabilities. In a century which has brought so many radical changes in methods of transport, manners, costume, and so on, we need to examine any object which has been as it were carried over from the nineteenth or some earlier century, so that we may at least find out what there is about its design that has brought it intact through such a landslide.

We have all seen the pantomime comedian dropping a trayful of dishes, then finding that one has somehow failed to break, and finishing it off with a hammer. That is a well-worn comic gag which must appeal particularly to those who make a sort of religion of Modernism — for instance, those designers, architects, and writers to whom novelty is a stock-in-trade, and living tradition no more than a rival or barrier to their personal ambitions. What would not appeal to such people at all would be the sight of the clown hammering at some precious goblet of gold or bronze; dinting it perhaps, maltreating it, but failing to establish the notion that because everything else on the tray

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proved breakable, this too must be shattered at all costs. I am sorry to say that most of the determinedly modernistic books that I have seen in the past twenty-five years look to my normal eyes more like badly-dinted survivals of the ancient goblet than like newly-conceived vessels for ideas. But the failure of these attempts is no evidence that the modernizers are going to give up in despair. People who have been hypnotized by the future to the extent of despising any free gift from the past, are not at all quick to profit by their past mistakes.

What makes this important is the likelihood that some of the next tangible results of their passion for change at all costs will come into your hands; and they will demand from you far more articulate criticism and discussion than you ordinarily devote to the physical appearance of a book. There are certain common phrases which really ought to be accepted as un-answerable objections when they come from the habitual book reader — a person who is supposed to look *into* a book, not to look *at* it. No such reader should be forced to particularize in technical language his simple report that a book is 'not easy to read', or 'typographically distracting'. But when a printed book is deliberately put forward as a new departure in design, its typographer may not be in the mood to accept such a dismissal. Nor will he necessarily be able to see why the most damning of all criticisms is simply the phrase 'unfamiliar-looking' — not easy to recognize *as* a book, not quickly distinguishable from a piece of advertising matter such as a catalogue. He may still need to be told that the very first thing that any printed message has to do, from a book or newspaper to a leaflet, is to give the beholder advance notice of the *kind of thing* it is. You will see ugly seed-catalogues today side by side with handsome ones

intelligently designed; you will, I hope, despise the ugly ones
and rejoice over the good ones; but if you ever find a seed-
catalogue that looks like a Bible, or a newspaper, or a political
pamphlet, then you will not simply be displeased but actually
confused and obscurely shocked. The primary duty of the
printer — a duty handed down from the days of Gutenberg —
is to 'style' the job so that it shall look like what it is; the un-
recognizable seed-catalogue, if you ever do come across it, will
have been designed by some layman and produced over the
indignant demurrer of its printer.

It is a pity to have to delay our consideration of tendencies
which might actually affect the format of the printed book in
order to clear away the confusions which are now being created
by the small *avant-garde* of typography in their quest for a new,
or as they would like to have it called, 'the modern' style of
book presentation. But to show why this clarification seems
to me important, let me give an excerpt from a letter which I
recently received from one of America's most distinguished
graphic artists, Mr T. M. Cleland, who along with Mr Bruce
Rogers may be said to represent the continuity of the Western
European tradition in the American graphic arts and the arts of
the book. Whereas Mr Rogers has been content to enrich that
tradition with a succession of famous volumes, leaving the
novelty-seekers to try to match them in their own harsher
idiom, Mr Cleland has declared open war on what he calls 'the
era initiators'. He reports having received

'. . . a circular which if your neck is flexible enough to stand
turning your head at an angle of 45° to your torso, and you
have set enough type in your time to be able to read it upside
down and backwards, will reveal the fact that the document

advertises a book entitled "books for our time" (Capitalization not mine) and that it costs $5.50 and is published by a venerable and dignified institution. It also states with truly astonishing prescience that this book marks the beginning of an era. So many different eras have been begun by so many professional era starters that it is hard to see how there will be room for them all. This is a book of essays by a number of the most eminent priests and prophets of this era, and, you guessed it! one in particular by era initiator Armitage entitled "attitudes behind design".'

He then devotes a few well-chosen words to that essay. I will not quote them, but I will tell you that his reason for pointing his rapier specifically at Mr Merle Armitage of New York is not one of personal dislike. What gives Mr Armitage the privilege of being singled out for the pillory or any other public platform is not so much his manifestoes or experiments as the circumstance that he was then the President of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, a body which has the same responsibility for choosing and honouring the best-designed and best-produced printed books of the year in America, that the National Book League has in Great Britain. A man in such a position as that, anywhere in the world, must automatically invite praise or derision as the case may be, by associating himself with those who anticipate the verdicts of posterity. If he merely expresses impatience with the past and a desire to work out forms more acceptable to present tastes, he is on that safe ground which is roped off for the announced experimentalist. But if he sets up as an 'era initiator' he moves on to very boggy ground indeed — that ground called the future: and we are

bound to judge his work more strictly. There can be no more drastic test of the survival-value of tradition than repeated examination of the alternative new forms — to the point where they lose their mere shock-value and can be considered dispassionately on the very merits they claim: efficient function, fitness for purpose, success in conveying graphically something of the spirit of our own time and the supposed future.

By that fair test I have yet to find an *avant-garde* book that offers any serious threat to the conventions of book style; but I have found many that actually pour ammunition into the traditionalists' hands. Thus a book may be printed in sans-serif type because its designer is one of those aesthetic nudists who think anything looks better, or at least more 'modern', for being stripped. But serifs are by no means inessential ornaments: they enable us to distinguish cap. I from lower-case l and arabic numeral 1, they strengthen the descending main-strokes by forming a buttress against the halation of light from the white paper, they unobtrusively mark the line on which lower-case characters are ranged, and they are essential in preventing such a word as 'Illicit' from looking silly. Sans-serif, moreover, like its fellow-Victorian jobbing-type called Egyptian, is inefficient as a book type because the lower-case characters have no 'stress' or variation of curve-thickening.

I give you these points, complete with their typographic terminology, for your convenience when you are next shown a book in sans-serif by someone who is too persistent to be dismayed by the simple statement that you 'somehow didn't care for it'. But you and I know that the business of the book designer is to give the book readers (from the youngster with his primer to the old man in spectacles) something that they do

'care for' — tranquil-looking pages that render up their content with the least possible interference.

Similarly, an exaggerated gutter margin at the expense of the margins where your thumbs rest, or a folio number just where you would never look for it, or a nudistic omission of the running-head (so that you cannot tell what book is so enthralling the girl next to you on the bus seat), or a use of decorative rule that makes your eyes ache, are more likely to be resented as typographic 'interference' than welcomed as evidences that creative designers are rescuing the printed book from its servile position as a mere channel of literary communication and treating it as a means of aesthetic self-expression.

I am thinking of one futuristic book which shows how far wrong a designer can go when he imagines that the book of the future is going to allow him any perceptible room for self-expression — let alone the vast amount of room that this one presupposes. The mere callous squandering of white paper on this experiment reminds me that the real book of the future is going to be a paper-famine book: one in which every subtle and self-effacing trick known to professional typographers will have to be used to retain some air of ease, dignity and distinction, and above all familiarity, in overcrowded pages of thin, poor-quality paper with the sort of casing board that buckles because it is too thin. Let the contrast between this unreal 'futuristic' book and the grim future just envisaged serve to remind us how important it is, in discussing anything to do with the future, to get down to basic principles and inquire what sort of thing is really happening and beginning to happen today — to the readers and potential readers of books, whose tastes and necessities will inexorably shape the books of the future.

So we turn now to something more characteristic of 'the spirit of our time': the new respect with which major typographic designers are looking upon the cheap paper-back book. Formerly their covers were decorated but their texts were evidently handed over to the printer with no more instruction than to get the whole of the 'matter' into a given maximum number of pages — with the implication that readers who were so poor as to be forced to put up with paper covers would never grumble at dull and cheap-looking typography. Fifteen years ago, Mr Allen Lane, launching the Penguin Books, instructed his first typographic designer, Mr Edward Young, to make the series look worthy of its general object — that of providing readers with good literature in civilized and attractive dress 'for the price of a packet of Players'. There is the Penguin *Odyssey*, of which more than half a million copies have already been sold at what is nowadays less than the price of a packet of Players. It was designed — as was the charming series of the Penguin Shakespeare — by Mr Jan Tschichold, once the leading exponent of the 'Bauhaus' style of *avant-garde* typography, but now the most distinguished convert to typographic traditionalism. There are examples of other books issued under the Penguin aegis, designed by Mr Hans Schmoller, another internationally recognized typographer. A generation ago men of Mr Schmoller's talent were fixing their eyes upon the 'fine' limited edition as the ideal problem for the designer: the 'trade' book was only beginning to profit by the epoch-making series of demonstration offered by the Nonesuch Press, that machine composition, machine-made paper, photo-mechanical illustration, and machine casing could, in the hands of an honest and adroit designer, convey something of the luxury

and more than all of the convenience-in-reading of the luxuri-
ous 'hand-printed' volumes inspired by the Kelmscott Press
in the 'nineties. Today the lesson has been learnt. The Penguin
Shakespeare presents in general format and typography no very
striking difference from an Aldine Classic of four hundred and
fifty years ago (minus its individual leather binding). At least
it is far nearer to that august prototype than was any cheap
sixpenny of, say, the year 1910.

What is 'new' about the handsomely-designed cheap book is
its determination to treat the literate Man-in-the-Street with
the kind of respect — based on the assumption that such a man
has some instinctive appreciation of good design — which
Aldus's generation felt for even the poorest travelling-scholar
who had thrown himself upon the newly-revived classics. In a
decade in which young married people have to be reminded
that there are such things as bookcases amongst the essentials of
living-room furniture, any effort to make the cheap book look
covetably charming can be welcomed by every profession and
industry of the book world. The book of the future will not be
necessarily what the book of today is in France — paper-bound;
but if the habit of buying and owning books is to gain ground,
the paper-back must continue to be taken very seriously as the
hardest and, in some ways, the most rewarding challenge that
confronts the typographers today.

When we look back upon the whole history of the book,
from the earliest days of the reed-written papyrus scroll or
volumen, we find one period — the third and fourth centuries of
our era — when two radically different kinds of physical object,
the *volumen* and the bound *codex,* existed side by side. At the
beginning of that time of transition, the *codex* scarcely counted

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as a 'real book'; it had more the position of the modern pamph-
let or pocket reference-book. A century later it was the scroll
that had ceased to be thought of as a 'real book'. Midway of the
fifteenth century came the printing-press and the whole notion
of the 'Edition', or mass-producing identical copies corrected in
advance. Now within our lifetime has appeared a new kind of
scroll, not yet recognized as such or thought of as a 'real book'
by anyone. It is a tightly-wound reel of celluloid film printed
with innumerable pictures, and we may recognize in it, for
good or evil, the first fully-mechanized book; for, as the
pictures are unreeled by machine, shadow images on a screen
act out and speak out anything from a lecture to a performance
that is dramatic in form but often more related to the novel (e.g.
in its ability to re-create atmosphere and local colour) than to
the 'stage play' proper.

The point of my mentioning this roll of celluloid here is that
it does do much that the conventional book does, in the way of
communicating ideas, but that it almost wholly eliminates that
need to co-operate by a conscious effort of will which character-
izes 'reading', i.e. decoding arbitrary symbols such as the letters
of the alphabet. Reading is a kind of performance, involving
skill and familiarity. The present and future generation of book
readers will be accustomed from childhood to being 'read to
out loud' — by the radio and by that cinema machine which
mechanically does the 'performing' (nearly the equivalent of
reading) as its wheels turn. The new long-playing gramophone
records come even nearer to the parallel road of multiplied
sound messages, to the multiplied sight messages which we call
printed books.

There is this much point in recognizing the cinema film as a

brand-new and special kind of book, that such an admission helps us to see the 'real' book readers of today and tomorrow for what they are and have always been — a relatively small *élite*, people drawn from different income groups but distinguished by their ability to concentrate continuously on one fairly long piece of reading-matter. We no longer see that *élite* as one particular class like the clerical class of the Middle Ages; but at least we do see them as a group far more clearly than our Victorian ancestors did in the days when the new idea of universal compulsory literacy was raising a vision of the entire population being converted to the habit of reading printed books. If that wholesale conversion had even begun in our day — as it might conceivably have begun if Marconi and Edison had not stepped in — the first printing of a popular new book would now be round about a million copies and the 'book of the future', and of today, would have to be set in newspaper format, seven or eight columns of fine print to the page, because that is the cheapest way of printing fifty thousand words as a continuous text. There would also have been a revival of the practice of publication in monthly parts which was so useful at the time when a third of England's population was being swiftly converted to literacy. Just after the late war a German publishing firm was, in fact, forced by the paper famine to bring out books in newspaper format; and in 1943 the colossal editions of paper-backs devised for the United States troops gave us another picture of what the 'book of the future' might look like if it had to be churned out from a huge newspaper press with the greatest economy of paper. Those army books were in wide oblong format, set in double column to save space. They were not at all unreadable, but they had the

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fatal handicap, to the 'real' book readers, of 'not looking like books', so that format had no permanent effect on 'paper-back' style.

I suspect that the proportion of real book readers out of the total population is not very much greater today than it was in the fifteenth century. Obviously the percentage of regular book readers to all others who have been taught to read has been steadily dwindling from something near 100 per cent to what it is now — say 10 per cent — since literacy ceased to be a special profession. That hard core of book readers will, I think, remain as unaffected by the temptations of cinema and radio as it was by the counter-attractions of the *jongleur*, the image-seller, the popular pulpiteer, the ballad-singer, and the village gossip of the days when illiteracy carried no stigma.

But how about the rest? It is possible to imagine a state of society in which it would pay the ruling-class of Intelligentsia to create two distinct categories of literacy, one for the civil servants or rulers, the other for the docile citizens whose I.Q. tests at the age of eleven had marked them down to that level on which reading is even now largely confined to short messages printed in *capital letters*: public notices, the headlines and picture-captions of newspapers, telegrams, the balloons in comic strips, the captions on films, and so on. In other words, to matter that can most efficiently be set forth in the twenty-six simple code-symbols called *capitals*. I am not joking when I say that certain tendencies in education today have only to be projected into the future — I believe the mathematician would say 'extrapolated' — to show us a vision of all children being taught to read by primers set in capital letters only and carried through to the age of eleven by primary school-books set in

capitals only, and then at eleven being tested and sorted out much as they are tested and sorted out today, but with the brightest ones not simply being shot into grammar schools and scholarships, but actually initiated as potential members of the governing class, into the great secret of reading texts set in a combination of capital letters with lower-case or 'small' letters. Then you could mobilize your docile masses, trust them to find their way by enamelled signs to the bomb shelters or tax-collectors' offices or public lavatories, feed them their news headlines and comic-book entertainment, and so on, while automatically preventing them from reading any book or other document that might start them thinking for themselves !

If one out of a thousand of these capital-letter readers happened to have the curiosity to teach himself to read lower-case so as to find out what his governors were saying to each other in those closely printed memoranda and textbooks, that rebel could easily be singled out for either up-grading or liquidation as the psychologists might advise.

I am making your flesh creep with this idea only because it presents such a logical and plausible *terminus a quo* for those whose proper and healthy dislike of inherited privilege and inherited wealth has driven them to the substitution of an aristocracy of intellect, or specifically the rule of the book-learned. Already we see these partisans making things as difficult as possible for the 'bright' children — e.g. haunting their days and nights with the spectre of scholarship examinations — while offering all sorts of concessions to the dullards by way of making their education easier, jollier, less dependent on reading and writing. Already in America learned authorities of Teachers' College (Columbia University) and notabilities of

the Parent Teachers' Association have made a success of an effort
to fight fire with fire by publishing ten-cent comic books of
their own, not quite as bloodthirsty as the run of such books
and even having some tenuous connection with factual know-
ledge. Already, in this country, any elderly compositor will tell
you that the apprentices of fifteen, who are now entering his
necessarily literary craft, are slower readers, worse writers, and
more abominable spellers than he has ever had to deal with
before. They are, of course, children who didn't get singled out
for the sweat and strain of the Intellectual Life at the age of
eleven; the ones for whom things were made easy.

Call it satire if you will, to envisage the 'Common Man's'
book of the future as a succession of pictures, comic-strip style,
with 'balloons' and captions in capital letters only: but remem-
ber that the main purpose of satire is to show in advance, by
logical exaggeration of present evidence, possibilities that are
too easily thrust aside because we 'don't like to think of
them'.

I believe that the library of the future will have to find room
for various objects which will have been gradually recognized
as 'special kinds of books' — long-playing records, reels of
16-mm. and other films, and microfilm-books with their
scanners. But the objects that we now recognize as 'real books'
will remain, and will remain as recognizable, in style and
format, as their harassed publishers can possibly contrive to
make them, since this is the worst possible moment for alienat-
ing the hard-core of book readers by defiant experimentalism.
Letterpress printing (impression from raised metal characters)
will not be superseded by planographic (offset litho) printing as
long as the paper shortage imposes the use of relatively small

print, which needs all the clarity and sharpness of the letterpress process. The illustrated magazines could all be composed by the new machines that eliminate type-metal and photograph the text direct on film for lithographic reproduction without seriously affecting the book printers. Similarly, the spiral or Plastoic binding, which opens absolutely flat, is unlikely to be used for anything but cookery-books and the like; it is too costly, and it forbids adequate labelling down the spine.

No, the designers of books are not going to find any easy new departure or piece of machinery to give their work the stamp of modernity. Their problem will be to prevent the shortages from affecting the printed book in the way in which the coinage was affected after the Romans departed from Britain. You may have seen the pitiful little coins of that epoch, each a flicker of the dying torch of the classical world. You have at least seen the 'Wartime Economy Regulation' book of a few years ago — at its worst, where some publisher without any special knowledge of typography sent the manuscript to some printer unaccustomed to the special problems of book printing; and at its gallant best, when an adroit publisher used a space-saving but distinguished typeface in a small but 'large-appearing' size, with the 'prelims' reduced to the minimum but thoughtfully designed. You have witnessed in the past ten years or so a remarkable increase of general interest in typography, and you may well attribute it to the fact that readers (and those who work for readers) take more notice of the look of print when they discover what a difference can be wrought by an efficient typeface and competent 'machining' (actual impression), between two books that get the same number of words into the same number of pages.

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The outstanding book designers of the future will, I believe, rise without dismay to the challenge of world shortages of materials. They will put more of their skill to the design of reference books, where the very smallest type sizes can be cunningly deployed to preserve the look of dignity and legibility. They must, if they are to live in a democracy, spend much more time on rescuing the school-book from the consequences of our ancestor's assumption that compulsory books can afford to look grim and repulsive. They will have little chance to work upon luxurious, beautifully-illustrated limited editions; but in children's books they will continue to find real justification for pictures and decoration — and, for once, the chance to decide the size of type by the age of the reader, not by the limits to which grown-ups are thought willing to strain their eyesight.

We are here describing something much more difficult than a mere carrying-forward of the living tradition of book style and production. Since the difficulties of the task cannot be abated it is all the more important for those who represent the book-reading public to supply the moral support, the inspiring applause for good work, the informed criticism which gives the designer the courage to tackle the hardest job. Those librarians who are now studying the theory of typography and the technique of book production, and showing the public something of the secrets of these most self-effacing arts, are playing a vital part in buttressing the defences of the decently-produced book of today and of the future against the worst that can be done to it by the cranks and 'era starters' on the one hand, and on the other hand any demoralized publishers who might feel tempted to use their sorrows of shortage and rising costs as a blanket

excuse from any interest in seductive design. To a book-conscious public, to a public that is willing to rank book design and production amongst the arts while still remembering that they are nobly and gloriously *servile* arts dedicated to the communication of thought — to such a public, the future will still bring books that look as if they had been designed with pride and intelligence.

TYPOGRAPHY AS A VOCATION

DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

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To some people in the printing trade today it is still necessary to prove that *Management is concerned with Design*. We shall be exploring what that statement means, but I might say at once what it does not mean.

I shall *not* be trying to say that a manager has to be, or ought to be, a designer, or typographer, or layout man. This will not be a treatise on the elements of typographic design; it would be as absurd to try to cover that whole subject in a single chapter as it would be to attempt to condense the technique and problems of Costing into a single hour. But there we happen to have a very significant parallel which is worth following.

Within the lifetime of many people in the trade, the whole idea of systematic Costing was evolved out of nothing and presented to the trade *as* an idea, and brought within what we might call the manager's 'terms of reference'. We know that a manager has no time to do the work of a costing-clerk and we also know that he cannot afford to be a costing expert. No manager can afford to be an 'expert', in the modern sense of the word, in any subject; he is not paid to specialize, he is paid to perform the miracle of inducing specialists and experts to get on together without snubbing each other to death. On the other hand, a manager who had never studied or attempted to practise the principles of Costing would be under a cruel handicap in the modern printing office, and any manager who went so

far as to maintain that he was not concerned with Costing (implying that he was not interested in it and preferred to have nothing to do with it), would qualify better for a fairy tale than for the modern printing industry. I think this analogy holds good for Design.

Having cleared away what we do *not* mean, we can then find out precisely what we *do* mean, by the word Management (in this connection), and by the word Design as applied to printing.

I hope that by getting rid of a lot of verbal misunderstandings which are floating about nowadays, we shall reach a point where those readers who already agree on this matter of the importance of Design will be so confirmed in that belief, and those few who have hitherto been apathetic will be so firmly convinced, that we shall all of us together take a united grip on the handle of the typographic *dagger*. For I do not want to end this chapter without taking a few pointed digs at the sort of Design and the sort of designer that might run riot, and cause managers some embarrassment, just for lack of any articulate and reasoned objection and counter-action on their part.

So let us first of all think of a more forcible and provocative way of saying that understanding of the problems of Design helps Management. Let us put it in such a way that it will have to be proved or disproved, acted upon or rejected; not simply allowed to hang up in the air as a matter of opinion. This is the proposition which I put forward. Whatever may be said of other industries, it is true of the printing industry that no training and experience of scientific business administration or management can be counted adequate or thorough unless it has included some elementary study of the theory and practice of Design as it affects the modern printer.

That leaves me the onus of showing cause why a trade institute, with all that it is concerned with in administrative matters, company and contract law, costing and finance, organization, welfare, and industrial and human psychology, must nevertheless spare some part of its time in the theory of Design as it affects the modern printing office.

I must support this contention by showing, if I can, that awareness of Design, or consciousness of the look of the job and the way in which it affects the ultimate reader's eye, tends to make a good manager an even better one, and secondly, helps him to bring out the best that is in his craftsmen and to avoid certain psychological frustrations which are the bane of modern mechanized industry and may very easily be its final undoing.

Now what do we mean by Management? We know that scientific management in the modern sense is so new a thing that one of its major pioneers, who I am proud to say was a woman, died only sixteen years ago. Like most very new sciences that are built on principles which have been vaguely familiar for 3,000 years, scientific management is very careful indeed about its professional jargon and status. Nevertheless, we may presume to boil it down to 'the art and science of *getting things done* efficiently, to the ultimate profit of all concerned' — that is to the financial profit of the owners or shareholders, but with plenty of reference also to the physical, spiritual, and mental profit of everyone working under that roof. Putting the same thing negatively, one would say that Management consists of foreseeing and preventing collisions, bottlenecks, backtracks, queries, disputes, leakages, and all the other things that prevent things from being done efficiently and at a profit.

The manager has two kinds of instruments for getting things done, and these two instruments are absolutely and diametrically opposed.

There is the instrument called plant — machinery and equipment. Of that kind of instrument you may say that it is at its best at the moment when it is first installed, and that it steadily depreciates in value thereafter, year after year, and that due allowance is made for that steady loss of value until it is all 'written off' in due course. Another very important thing that one can say about plant is that it *does not notice* how you regard it, or what you say about it, or how you feel toward it. One of the essential things about a machine is that it does not mind what you think about it, because it has no mind.

The other kind of instrument is one which your scientific administrator sometimes refers to by such scientificated words as 'personnel', or 'operatives', or some other term that applies well enough to a bench of empty-eyed young women all rhythmically screwing gadgets together while the motion-study expert creeps up on them with a stopwatch. But as we are talking about the *printing* industry, let us refer to these other instruments which are not plant, as human beings. Or, better still, skilled craftsmen. Or let us even call them by that almost secret term which you never allow an outsider to hear because it does not connote the same thing to an outsider, namely, 'tradesmen', men who have served their term at the trade.

Let me stress that what we are now saying applies specifically to the printing trade, which alone amongst all industries has a continuous 450-year tradition of literacy amongst its artisans, and has therefore ranked first not only in seniority, as the first mass-production industry, but in prestige, as the one demanding

the most education and responsibility from the artisan. I dwell on this point because I have several times heard one of the horn-rimmed fraternity implying that the principles of scientific management, once grasped, can be applied as easily in a printing office as in a pickle-factory; and every time I hear it, it frightens me to think that anyone could believe such a patent absurdity.

What do we know of these human beings who work in printing offices? We know that they are the direct opposites of machines in two important respects. Instead of starting at 100 per cent efficiency and depreciating each year, they start 'use-less', and gradually appreciate in value. At the moment when they are, so to speak, 'installed', they are even worse than useless, for skilled time and costly machinery have to be spared for their instruction; and even when that responsibility is dumped on a set of outsiders called a Training School, it cannot be wholly shuffled off. In short, whereas the machine is gradu-ally 'written off', the craftsman is gradually 'brought on'.

Again: whereas the machine is supremely indifferent to how you regard it, the human being *appreciates in value more or less in proportion to his realization that he is himself valued and appreciated by the management.*

There is not a soul in the trade who could not support with many instances the statement that a young man will gain in value to his employers — i.e. gain in skill, responsibility, diligence, ingenuity, and team spirit — much faster and much more surely, once he knows that he is being judged and valued for the qualities which *distinguish him from* a machine and reveal him as a man with a mind. Similarly, how many tragic illustra-tions could be given to the contention that nothing so tends to undermine and pervert the potential value of a skilled worker

as the dreadful suspicion that his actions are being valued as if he were a machine — by mechanical standards. Here we stand on the foreshore of an almost uncharted sea; the industrial psychologists are still paddling in its shallows. I suspect they have been so busy timing the motions of the blank-eyed factory girls with and without the bleat of *Music While You Work* that they have yet to chart the profound frustrations and wounds that can develop in a mind which has been dedicated to skill, and then has been treated like a machine, and denied the craftsman's right to see the job through and see how it turned out, and know what it was *designed to do*.

All this has been said to underline the point that Management is concerned no less with human minds than with machines and ledgers. If we can now show that an interest in Design as it permeates the office gives human beings a healthier attitude to their jobs, encourages team spirit, and restores to the craftsman at least some part of his right to see the job as a whole, we shall have gone far towards proving our main point.

But first, what do we mean by Design?

When we speak of 'the design of' a piece of printed matter we mean, in effect, how it looks and (what comes to the same thing) how it 'works', at the moment when it is delivering its message to the sort of reader to whom it is addressed. In some industries it is possible to make a thing that looks good but works clumsily, like a handsome teapot that balances badly as you lift it. But that is not the case in typography. You 'use' print by looking at it. Designing print means making it look the way it ought to look, in order first to attract or appetize the reader's eye in the split second before he begins to read, and then either to keep him reading or to help him pick out the part

he might want or need to read. Designing print means pre-visioning what the job is *for* (i.e. to be read or consulted with the least difficulty and maximum pleasure by a given sort of reader), and then co-ordinating all the elements of that final achievement. That includes seeing that the process is right for the purpose, the illustration right for the process, the paper right for the illustration, the type right for the paper and for other factors, and the general arrangement and style right for the reader. In other words, *planning*.

Just as the manager knows how to plan, organize, and co-ordinate men and machines with his eye on 'delivering the job', so the designer has to know how to plan with his eye on 'delivering the message'. The manager, plotting the 'flow of work' through this and that department, is doing in other terms what a good typographic designer does when he plots and schemes to guide the reader's eye from this point to that point, inexorably, with no confusing back-tracking, fatigue-errors or other disasters which are common to bad Design and bad Management. It is no accident that designer and manager often use the same basic word in different 'shop' senses. For instance, every manager must be good at 'layout' in the sense of arranging facilities for work so as to avoid bottlenecks, etc. But what is a pencil layout, in the typographer's sense, but a drawing showing the best arrangement of those arbitrary symbols called letters which the reader must decipher in the finished job? My point is that though manager and designer represent two different points of emphasis — one being concerned primarily with clearing profit, the other primarily with delivering a message — they are nevertheless doing the same sort of thing.

Why is this similarity not more widely recognized on either

side? Well, we know that 'Scientific Management' is still in its infancy and still struggling to convince the working class that it is not concerned with establishing little dictatorships in every factory and office. But the art and science of Industrial Design is also in its days of infancy; the technique of typographic layout and design for the machine age was only beginning to emerge at the end of the First World War. And here too there has been a struggle against prejudices. The people who are still so old-fashioned as to imagine that a manager gets things done by imposing his will on underlings are probably also old-fashioned enough to be unaware that a designer is not the same thing as an 'artist', that is, he is not a solo performer who creates whole things by hand and signs his name with a flourish; a designer for industry is better described as the Chairman of a committee which, before the design is put into production, has had the benefit and advice and criticism from every expert in the place — technical, costing, and all the rest. This fact is not sufficiently well known: witness the number of people who ask 'Who designed this?' of some object or typeface which was evolved by consultation and team work.

We have seen how the language of Scientific Management has been shaped by its need to deal with huge impersonal engineering and manufacturing concerns; let us now remember on the other hand that the modern language of Industrial Design has been quite noticeably shaped by the preponderating need in modern industry to create ready-made goods for an unknown mass market: to guess what the market wants on the advice of some hard-bitten salesman, and then, if the guess is wrong, to dump it in some bargain basement and try again. Little wonder that professional designers, in the midst of their

excitement about 'streamlined' fountain-pens and the relative sex appeal of clothes-dummies, have not paid much serious attention to an industry in which the job is still 'bespoke' or made to suit the people that are going to pay for it.

Now having defined Management as the art and science of getting things done profitably, and Typographic Design as the art and science of making a given effect on the intended reader without wasting material or skilled labour, let us ask in what ways Management 'is concerned with' Typographic Design.

Here let me hurry over the obvious points first. It is easy enough for anyone to see that a designer who has some grasp of the principles of management — let's say some theoretical knowledge of all that is involved in getting a team of men and a pattern of machines to work on a job — will be a better designer. He will be 'conscious of the ways and means'; not so obsessed and bedazzled by ways and means as is the Technician (a notoriously poor designer), but nevertheless always healthily aware that there's more in good typography than the making of perfect pencil layouts.

Well, by the same token, a manager who has been trained to be conscious of the 'look of the job' is bound to be a more valuable investment to the company that employs him. For that same sensitivity of the eye and taste will reveal to him a half-dozen ways of getting more value out of a given plant.

He will see the value of cleverly packaging and labelling the printed matter; of not merely keeping the place clean and light, but actually making use of colour-therapy principles in painting the walls: and of spotting and getting rid of various inanimate Fifth Columnists which annually head-off thousands of pounds'

worth of business — for instance, an old-fashioned ugly letter-head, or the sort of type-book that makes a modern print buyer titter with scorn. The design-conscious manager knows how to introduce a certain amount of discreet standardization (based on the success of good designs) thereby reducing his stocking and storing problems. The design-conscious manager knows the language in which he can most successfully persuade the outside designer to modify some extravagant detail — without precipitating a row and calling down a snub.

And the design-conscious manager can be invaluable to the business in one of those crises, which are nowadays being brought by the rapid spread of the restyling movement, or movement for the improvement of standards of Typographic Design. There exists the now-famous contrast between what the City and Guilds Institute thought good enough for its Prospectus of examinations in printing, typography, etc — complete with the redundant full points, Victorian gothic, clumsy black type on dark blue cover paper, etc, side by side with the no-more-expensive, but infinitely more effective and encouraging edition produced by the same printer, presumably at no extra cost, but with the benefit of a designer who thought the whole problem out from the beginning instead of taking the thing off the hook and seeing how it was done last time. There exists a typically repulsive bulletin of a school board, contrasted with the quite charming and inspiring piece of typography which replaced it, when Mr Newsom of the Education Department of the Hertfordshire County Council submitted proud-looking for shamefaced-looking print. There exist typical letterheads, folders and periodicals, before and after their transformation — not forgetting the immensely influential case of *The Times*.

There is the case of thousands of pieces turned out by Her Majesty's Stationery Office; thousands done in the past in a combination of ugly clarendons and a depressingly mediocre old style; thousands which now are going through in typefaces of which all British designers can be proud, and with layouts and covers which often reach high distinction. It was not so many years ago that printers could reasonably say: 'Some day I may put in a decent typeface to attract better-class customers, but I *must* put in No. 2 Old Style if I want Stationery Office contracts.' Today, that remark would not make sense.

Well, when news comes to an office that some important periodical or set of jobs is going to be radically restyled and modernized, that ought of course to send a tingle of pleasant excitement up and down the office, and start all sorts of arguments on the whys and wherefores of each change, and set each craftsman alert for the public's reaction to the improvement. And that is what it *does* do . . . when the manager is genuinely delighted that the improvement is taking place, and genuinely anxious that everyone should get the benefit of the chance to see good design in action. Alas, we all know of cases where these restylings have begun in an upflare of mutual wrath, with the customer saying 'Why have you let it look like this for so many years?' and the printer growling '*You* seemed satisfied with it', and the whole thing resulting either in a loss of contract or in a lot of sullen resentment on the part of the men who are being told to do something different without being told why.

And that brings me to what is possibly the most important point in this chapter, namely, that the printing office in which the apprentice — not only an apprentice-compositor, but any

apprentice — is more or less surrounded by genuine interest in design and has a chance, so to speak, to soak it in, is a place with a better team spirit, a place where men take more pride and actual enjoyment in their day's work. I never heard it better expressed than by Mr Carter of the Westminster Printing Works, who said, if I quote correctly, 'If the lad is not given any understanding of design and layout, if he merely thinks he is carrying out orders, he is tempted to swing the lead and you have to stand behind him; but the moment he has started trying his hand at a bit of layout, *he* stands behind *you*'.

What I am stressing is that whereas fifty years ago the man, particularly in the country, was indentured 'to be instructed in the art of a printer', and gained the chance to practise every function of a printing office and see how the job affected the reader, nowadays he can do nothing of the sort, and unless design comes to the rescue, by fortifying his sense of order, showing him what the job is for, and making him work out what it ought to look like, he will be as thoroughly bored with his job as you and I would be with ours if we had no clear idea what it was all *for*.

And now — let us think for a moment of what will happen to Typographic Design, book and jobbing alike, if all of us should let it go by default to the professional innovators — the self-expressionist boys who use typography just as they would use interior decoration or window-dressing, as an enjoyable method of making themselves better known in designing circles.

We have seen plenty of examples of what I should call 'twer-pography', with bleak-looking rules bleeding off stark-looking pages, and caps. left on or taken off proper names according to

whim, and a general effect of making the words cringe or mutter sullenly.

We have seen half-tones printed over the reading matter at the behest of artists who couldn't think of any *other* way of distracting the reader's mind from the text (and diverting it to the appreciation of the clever little layout-man). We have seen what remarkably bad presswork is often associated with these productions — possibly because the designer thinks that the layout is everything, and the machining nothing; possibly because the machine-room contributed a bit of 'sullen effect' on its own.

Well, those fuzzy folk are going to be taken quite seriously as designers of the printed word, if we fail to raise up from our own trade the sort of articulate intelligent designer who can grasp not only the problems of manufacture but those of 'use' too, and talk with publishers, artists, and general readers in their own language. And if such men leave our trade and set up as middlemen or agents, let them at least have been so trained that they are a pleasure to work for. The craft-trained designers are apt to retain that medieval sense of the glory of anonymity which is so strong in the printing office: they will not be tempted to play the giddy goat with printed words in the frantic hope that the public will cry 'Who, *who* designed that too frightfully amusing piece of typography?'

THE ARTIST AND TYPOGRAPHY.
A WORD OF WARNING

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FOR SOME YEARS PAST it has been inadvisable, and in the near future will be disastrous, for any commercial artist to start upon his career without a fairly extensive and practical knowledge of how printed words get on paper. Those of us in the trade who think it a moral duty to help along promising young artists — if not with commissions, at least with practical advice — are all too familiar with the case of the highly-talented graduate of an art school whose portfolio of examples clearly shows that the only kind of printed thing which he has been able to envisage as an opportunity for his skill is the pictorial book-jacket. It never seems to occur to those innocents of the interwar years that, for one book publisher who might be looking for new talent on a book-jacket, there are at least five manufacturers badly in need of catalogue covers and decorative drawings with distinction and originality; or that for one editor of a magazine who would be willing to encourage an unknown and inexperienced illustrator, there are several who want the art department to be staffed with younger and more adventurous designers who could play bright stunts with make-up and lettering as well as decoration without making a hash of it.

The word artist no longer denotes anyone who practised the three liberal arts — grammar, logic, and rhetoric. To the general public it has come to mean 'a maker of pictures and

images', with the understanding that the making was hand-making and called for originality as well as skill. 'Art' refers either to the pictures and images themselves (as in the phrase 'he is collecting art') or to the making process (e.g. 'she is taking art'). One might as well accept this narrowed-down definition and ask what the artist as a picture-maker needs to know about type as part of his training for a livelihood.

Among art students there are some who are taking, or intend to take, a course in typographic design. Others are drawn to-wards the subject but are not sure whether they can afford to spend the time in so special a field when they are not primarily concerned with any branch of industrial art or design. In my opinion these people should by all means take the time to acquire a good theoretical grounding in typography.

Those who want to steer clear of commercial art and retain their independence and aesthetic integrity as pictorial or graphic artists are more likely than not to be forced to teach for a livelihood. If they teach in a vocational centre, that is, if they are going to help other artists to earn a living, then they should know enough about typographic design to guide younger men who are training to be commercial artists. If, on the other hand, they are undertaking the teaching of 'art' in a secondary school, meaning the appreciation of the arts as part of training for citizen-ship and the good life, then there will be no excuse for omitting the appreciation of typography from such a course. Buildings and printed words are the two kinds of specially designed objects that the citizen is forced to look at day after day whether he likes it or not. The cultural level of his community is more fairly judged from its architecture and its printed matter than from any other set of clues. For general training in good taste,

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judgement, and the whys and wherefores of modern industrial design, no other practical field can be compared to that of typographic design for the richness and realism of its examples.

There is no doubt whatever that some critical study of the arts conduces to better citizenship and a more harmonious development of the personality. Those who hold the purse-strings of education have scarcely begun to realize how true this is; they are too often put off by the assumption that 'art' must, to begin with, mean picture-making and that 'good art' must mean the making of incomprehensible pictures in an atmosphere of defiant epigrams far removed from real life. Typography is never an inch removed from real life and is, therefore, well worth mentioning to those educational authorities who are terrified at the word 'art'.

But suppose that you will have no necessity to teach, suppose your genius or popularity sweeps you into the spotlight of fame and consequent independence. Could you then afford to know nothing about the making of the printed book? Let us think again.

One of the surest signs that an artist has 'arrived' in the estimation of wealthy connoisseurs and collectors is that he is invited to illustrate a fine limited edition. Not every publisher has the wherewithal to bring out a relatively unknown artist in the sort of edition that can properly be called 'finely printed': a phrase which means what it says and denotes above all flawless presswork, superb ink such as is never seen in large commercial editions, hand-made or mould-made paper, and handsome type in a generous size. Nor has every publisher the wit and ingenuity to make up for the lack of such luxury by thoroughly effective typographic design. If the book is a mess typographically, the

public may assume that the publisher had not much more vision in the choice of artist than he had in the choice of printer. Unless you know the difference between good printing as such and good typography as such, and between good and bad typographic effects, you will never realize in time what threatens to go wrong with that book on which part of your prestige may depend.

To those who are studying typography in the hope of practising as designers of printed matter, let me say that the skilled craft of type composition, acquired through long years of apprenticeship, involves not merely manual skill but very general knowledge of how to make different pieces of printing look the way they ought to look — how to make a title-page look like a title-page and not like a handbill, how to make a catalogue recognizable, and so on. During the past twenty years, there has been wide dissatisfaction with the styles handed down from Victorian days, and drastic restyling has been carried out, almost always by people outside the trade who had the advantage of being able to stand a step removed and see what the layman required. The best restyling of the pre-war years was the change of dress of *The Times* in 1931; the most significant of the post-war years was that of the City and Guilds Institute examination prospectus booklets. But the restyling period, or what has been called the 'typographic reformation,' has so far achieved its ends that from now onward any intelligent compositor, adequately trained in the principles of layout and print-planning, could organize the production of effective printed matter. The compositor turned 'typotect' — designer and undertaker of print in the sense that an architect is a designer and undertaker of building, with power to sub-contract work

— has an obvious advantage over the man who has never been a member of the printing trade. Any graduate of an art school who hopes to face that formidable rivalry would have to play his own trump card: the ability to illustrate and decorate brilliantly would be quite as much of an asset, in some circumstances, as the memory of a five or seven years' apprenticeship. But the makers of pictures and images have one handicap which they must realize and take pains to overcome. In the making of pictures, it pays a hundredfold to do something for the first time, to invent, to shock the ordinary man's eyes into new awareness. But in typography, that same effort can lead to all sorts of graphic monkeyishness, such as the tedious pretence that English can be written without recourse to capital letters.

Since we do not spell out words letter by letter in reading but grasp whole words as familiar shapes, we who read have very little patience with the man who is so frantically eager to call attention to himself as a typographer that he doesn't mind our having to puzzle over the question 'where is john brown?' until we guess whether 'john' has been hiding or sunbathing.

TYPOGRAPHY IN ART EDUCATION

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In the sense in which architecture is an art, typography is an art. That is, they both come under the head of 'making or doing intentionally with skill'. But they are not one-man arts like painting or oratory. The thing made, the finished work, is in every case the work of a team. The cathedral and its lectern Bible, the house and the books on its shelves, the hospital and the surgical-instrument maker's illustrated catalogue, the shop-building and the billheads and leaflets that go out from it — all those are products of skill and creative intention, 'works' which can give keen pleasure to the perceptive eye when the intention is clear and good, the execution honest and adroit. But not one of them was begun and finished as a whole thing by one artist.

Every work of architecture, every work of typography, depends for its success upon the clear *conveyance* of intentions, in words and otherwise, from one human mind to others: from the man who is supposed to know how the finished thing should look and function, to a concert of specialists who are responsible not only to the master-designer but also to the public. Faulty masonry, or a misprint, is not simply a betrayal of the whole intention, it is also a matter of public concern. The coping-stone might kill a man, the misplaced comma might start a riot or a suit for libel.

Any attempt to criticize works of architecture or typography,

any hope of appreciating and fostering significant new work in either field, must be based on knowledge of what *sort* of field it is. It is not the sort of meadow that one man and his dog can go out to mow. The building that offers no evidence whatever that skilled craftsmen worked exultantly upon it is in that respect a dull building: though the public which assumes that. building-craftsmen are only a crew of sullen concrete-pourers and steel-riveters will be quite content to perceive the architect's intention, to applaud his solution of the given problems and to think of the 'making' simply as architect-getting-his-own-way. The analogy holds for typography. The result of a good time-table standardization offers the informed critic quite as much pleasure as the sight of a successful new design for a chain of railway stations. There is, first of all, the pleasure of seeing something consistent and intelligent replace something incoherent and stupid; then there is the interest of noticing *why* the designer did this and that. One is actually delighted (in this case) to see that the intention was to lay down a 'foolproof' style which the dullest, most apathetic workman could not wreck; it would not have been a *good* standardization if that intention had not been present. This is all intellectual pleasure. But in a finely printed book, where most of the style-problems were solved four centuries ago, there is sensuous delight to be got from the feel of the paper, the 'bloom' of the presswork, the subtlety of the line-spacing, and other evidences that the craftsmen concerned were very decidedly *not* dull, apathetic workmen.

Bear with me if I keep using the word 'intention' in place of 'design', for we have not yet quite finished our distinction between typography and any one-man art. The sculptor who

feels his way, takes a new hint from an unsuspected flaw in the stone, even half-finishes a job simply in order to 'see' it, is taking a perfectly legitimate way of showing himself what he means. He is not wasting other men's time and skill. But the master builder, or master printer, who is not perfectly sure what he means to do must stop and envisage the thing in detail before he can buy the bricks, or reams of paper. He must have a 'design' in at least the old sense ('not by accident but by design') and probably also in the sense of design as *dessin*, drawing. The master builder's drawing is called a blueprint, the master printer's is called a layout. And whatever of the 'intention' cannot be shown in the drawing, e.g. as to the quality of the materials, is put into words and called, in both cases, the specification.

Here for the first time our builder-printer analogy breaks down, and in an exciting way. The divorce between designer-specifier and *entrepreneur* which took place in building some centuries ago and created the professional architect is only now beginning to take place in printing. You will not hear the word 'typotect' applied to any of the greatest typographic designers of our day, for although nearly all of them are outside the printing trade (i.e. neither indenture-freed craftsmen nor employing printers), they still prefer to function as consultants, not as contractors. They may take the credit or blame for every last detail of production as part of their responsibility for the whole 'look' of the finished thing; but they show no desire to set up as firms, sweat over public competitions, risk capital, or break down the specification into separate sub-contracts. But firms of publishers and advertising agencies are already doing something of the sort — to the alarm of the more craft-conscious master

printers who have no wish to be thrust into the ignoble position of the modern speculative builder.

So these printers are taking counter-action by employing their own typographic designers — or calling in the consultant themselves — or, better still, *training up men in their own shops as creative typographers*, and simultaneously *showing their customers how easily any educated person can become a creative patron, a distinguished 'amator' and instigator of typographic progress, even a co-designer of brilliantly effective work — if he has a first-rate printer at his elbow*. Those words in italics will give any art master or any head of an Art School a clue to the two main objects of this chapter.

One is to deal with the very few snags that one can find in the fairly simple matter of teaching typographic design in the vocational centre to future printers or to a mixed class of apprentices and 'laymen'. The other is to plead for the inclusion of training in the *Appreciation of Typography* in the secondary school, as part of a liberal education: not as preparation for a career but as preparation for life.

THE VOCATIONAL SIDE

The Art School *must* offer some instruction in typographic design whether or not it has a printing department. It dare not turn out fledgeling commercial-artists into their tragically over-crowded walk of life without any sound theoretical knowledge of typefaces, layout, and printing processes. It is wicked to let loose a would-be book-jacket designer whose ideas of the Roman alphabet are those of an eleven-year-old child. When a talented young illustrator is hawking his portfolio about in growing panic, or tumbling into the maw of a second-rate

commercial-art 'studio', he may well curse the school that never thought to train him to *design and* illustrate printed things, and so earn a livelihood while he is winning a reputation as an illustrator. A course in typographic design can even attract to the Art School people who would not go there for any other reason: future advertisers, salesmen, journalists, booksellers, and others. (If future Ministers of the Gospel could spare time for such a course we should not see so many mean-looking parish magazines.)

The instruction can be given, and is better given, without ever picking up a composing-stick. 'Touching type' is the poetic trade term for (for example) taking your fine layout to the case and making sure that it will work out in metal types — objects which will not compress like rubber if you have mis-calculated the amount of copy that will go into the space. But if you are in any doubt about that, if you *need* the verification of the stick, you are not yet a good layout-man. And any man who has to see a printer's proof before he can 'see' what he really wants as the printed effect, is not yet a competent designer — he is feeling his way like an artist and wasting other men's time. A perpetual craving to 'touch type' means either that the designer is not paying enough attention to the thing he is supposed to make with his own skilled hands — namely the pencil layout: or else that he is not sufficiently aware of what it is that he is designing — namely a whole 'printed thing'. But it is perfectly natural for the designer outside the trade to feel a twinge of envy when he sees the little types clicking into the stick. It may not prove anything that he needs to prove, but it does look such fun . . . to the man who is forbidden to 'touch type'.

There is the snag we spoke of. It is easily resolved. In too

many Art Schools they think it enough to tell non-trade students that the unions have bitter knowledge of how easy it is to pick up a smattering of type-composing technique, and that the man who has dedicated seven years of his life from an early age *really* to learn how, is not pleased to see amateurs messing about at the case. But that sort of defensive talk may leave the student still resentful, with just the sort of woolly-headed resentment which is the curse of modern industrial design. He is starting off on the wrong foot as a non-trade typographic designer if he cannot see why he should be delighted, enchanted, at being forbidden to 'touch type' — yes, even and especially when he is longing to do so. Do not confuse him by the modern phrase 'closed trade': use the technical term our ancestors used and call composition an *Art and Mystery* (something requiring arduous initiation): show him why it is the most responsible manual art known to civilization, and why the noble habit of 'following the copy even if it goes out of the window' takes years to ingrain. Use, exploit that pang of envy to build in him a profound respect for compositors, a habit of respect which will be invaluable to him when the time comes for *him* to command *their* respect as the co-ordinator of the whole job.

Seven years' concentration on one manual trade is a very heavy handicap to the typographic designer, who will need all the help that a general and liberal education can give him if he is to attain eminence as a consultant. But should the Art School attempt to turn apprentice-compositors into full-time designers who may well be snapped up by the agencies? Surely not. What then should the intelligent apprentice-compositor be taught about typographic design?

Every apprentice-compositor is, or should be, taught in the shop how to make a handbill look like a handbill, how to make a book title-page look like the title-page of a book, not like a frightfully clever design for a handbill; and so on. In other words, he is taught what his craft-ancestors were taught in every epoch since 1450: how to make the job recognizable for what it is. It has never been the printer's business to make it look 'different', nor has he had much to do with changes and improvements of the 'recognizable style'; it was the publisher, from Aldus's day onward, who thought out the new styles. Nor was there ever, until a century ago, any need to learn the difference between Caslon, Bodoni, Garamond, and other faces for continuous reading. Even today in the small printing office the master will tell you what typefaces he has, naming several fancy jobbing designs 'and of course our roman', meaning 'the type in which we set continuous reading-matter in sizes to 12-pt.'

So the lad's foreman is not unlikely to be a man who was taught early in this century how to make a sales-catalogue look like *any other* decent sales-catalogue (etc) of the epoch — and taught, moreover, by a foreman who still thought it a bit queer that the customer should not be content with 'modern' (ordinary) roman, but should want as an alternative a roman of the 'old style'. The school must make up the deficiencies of shop training and teach the creative compositor how to identify the best typefaces, how to tell the difference between antiquated pᴜᴇ contemporary styles and — this is new in history — how to dɿǝɥ the man who wants something 'distinctive' in the salesman's sense: something that distinguishes itself not from another *sort* of job but from a rival job of the same sort. The only other

corrective and supplement he needs from the typography class is a chance to notice and mistrust his own natural preference, as an artisan, for whatever looks difficult. He cannot help thinking that 'artistic' composition ought to involve some exceptional feat of manual skill, such as his grandfather performed by bending pieces of rule into decorative scrolls. (And of course he is so far right: 'artistic' *ought* to mean 'dauntingly difficult'.) If he is allowed to work off that steam on some harmless exercise such as making decorative type-pictures (which are very hard indeed to make cleverly) or unusually-mitred borders, he will be less restive in approaching the very different problems of design-for-reading.

<h2 style="text-align:center">THE EDUCATIONAL SIDE</h2>

Now let us turn to the possibilities of offering *Appreciation of Typography* as part of the secondary school's art instruction. Here we pass from the subject of education for art into the different matter of art for education. The object is not to train future artists but to train future citizens. Can some study of typography, and some elementary practice, contribute to that end?

The total amount of time allotted to art or contact-with-the-arts in the secondary school is curiously little, considering how peculiarly valuable such contacts are in helping the adolescent to adjust himself to the great pattern called civilization. The elementary-school art classes helped him to realize his ego, get something off his chest; the progressive elementary school rightly treats art as a branch of mental therapy, and values the paint brush because it helps children to 'show what they mean'. But now in the secondary school he must be helped to realize

that he is not only a *person* but also a member — of something older and larger than himself. He begins to notice aesthetically what other people 'mean' when they signal to him on canvas or stone, textiles or potter's clay. He keeps on making-and-doing things, but now with a new object, that of 'appreciation', or training of taste and critical judgement. The chance to practise now serves to inform and sharpen 'appreciation', and keeps it from degenerating into mere 'training in admiration'.

In his scrap of time, the art master must do what the good hostess does for the newly-arrived guest: first 'take him round the room', so that he may swiftly shake hands with all those arts and branches of industrial design which are going to affect him as a citizen; and then leave him in that corner of the room where he can make the acquaintance of the one most congenial *to him*. This can actually be done in two hours a week for the first year of 'general survey', followed by a year of exploration in one particular field. With drastic omissions it can be done in one hour a week. I am assuming that the most rapid 'handshake' takes three consecutive hours, and allows some chance to feel the tool and the material; anything less would be called simply 'hearing the names' of the lovely company. There is nothing wrong with that, of course: it is better merely to *name* an art (and say what the name means) than to leave the future citizen unaware of the very existence of various arts that might look to him for help (e.g. thatching), or to leave him ignorant of the derivation of the word (e.g. sculpture). If typography gets no more than a mention, that is better than the shame of allowing any literate — who would be illiterate if type had not been invented — to imagine that typography is something to do with maps (topography). But there are certain arts and branches

of design that should not simply be 'named', they should be given that minimum three hours in which you have some chance to arouse *intelligent curiosity*, and some rudimentary sense of the *citizen's responsibility for the health of that art*. To do that is to do a great deal for the community and the nation. The poet Archibald MacLeish bitterly said of this generation that 'knows all the answers' — *It is the questions that we do not know*.

Unless our young people are taught to 'question' works of art and design: 'How were you made? What new thing have you to tell me, about the beauty of nature or the possibilities of the human spirit? How do you fit your purpose?', they will go on being fooled by glibly meretricious work. But which arts provide the best exercise in 'questioning'? Obviously those which most affect the daily life of the individual and his community. Thus you dare not omit architecture, for it takes less than three successive hours to give the future citizen *some* valid appreciation of architecture *as it concerns him*: that is, some healthy curiosity about the design, planning, and construction of the buildings in which he is going to live, worship God, seek entertainment, visit the sick, etc, as well as of the ancient ones which he will be able to use as light upon the history of civilization. Any modern architect will grant that: he would be pitifully grateful for three hours — nay, three *minutes* — in which to tell the man in the street how to look at the street.

And for parallel reasons you dare not omit typography. In less than three hours you can arouse in any literate person a healthy curiosity about the design, planning, and execution of the printed matter which he will be *using* for the rest of his life — either as a business man who uses a brilliantly designed sales-catalogue, to enhance his firm's prestige, or as a reader uses a

book, for entertainment or instruction, or as the connoisseur uses a fine or typical piece of printing from any period since 1450, namely as a peculiarly revealing light upon the aesthetic and social tendencies of that epoch.

Just as the pupil would get a glimpse of the problems of stress and strain while trying his hand at one architectural paper-model, so he would glimpse the problems involved in typographic design while trying his hand at one 'layout', or learning to recognize a few outstandingly good typefaces as perfect examples of fitness for purpose. Three hours of elementary practice would at least destroy for ever the lay notion that printed words somehow hatch themselves on paper. Considering that our own generation has produced an exciting renaissance of typographic style, one which has already transformed the appearance of even such humble instruments as time-tables and cheap Bibles, it seems a pity that any young person should remain wholly unaware of what is going on under his very eyes. The door to that awareness can be opened in a matter of minutes, nowadays.[1] A child can instantly see the difference between a piece of printing that looks as if it had been scrambled together by dispirited technicians, and another which looks as if it had been *designed* to ingratiate itself and help the reader. A child can also see, from a moment's comparison of two sheets actually printed from the same forme, how careless use of unsuitable ink, paper,

1 Before 1925 there were not enough first-rate typefaces in existence to make such a course as this practicable. The reform of typographic design-for-industry started in the book field, but did not widely affect other kinds of printing until the early 'thirties. It is still going on. The war helped, by causing the melting-down of many old 'standing formes' of composed type and many freakish display founts; and by making it not only desirable but *necessary* to think of square inches of paper as too precious to waste.

etc, can wreck or 'blur the intention' of what might have been an exhibition-piece of brilliant typographic ingenuity. But that is a way of teaching for ever the lesson that *designing* (for industry) *means more than showing what you intend*: it also means choosing a manufacturer who has the wit, the equipment, and the workmen to carry through that intention. Alternatively it means knowing how to modify the design so as to bring it within the compass of the factory.

Let them trace with a pencil the lovely outlines of Eric Gill's Perpetua capitals, or the inimitable lower-case of Bembo, and tell them that in tracing round the edge of each letter they are doing something much nearer to 'cutting type' than they could do with a pen. That will prevent them from judging type, a product of metal-engraving, by the standards of calligraphy.

All this can be said and shown memorably in a short time, for you are only attempting to 'expose' the young minds to the germ of enthusiasm while inoculating them against some common misconceptions. The lad who enjoys spotting aircraft will learn in a trice the knack of spotting typefaces. Those who are already writing-in for any advertised sales-catalogue, on some obscure acquisitive instinct, will be startled to hear that they have been collecting examples (good and bad) of contemporary typography. And lest the emphasis should fall too strongly on the intellectual excitement of 'solving problems' (fitting the job to its purpose), you should try your best to let the young people see and *handle* some superb example of ancient, or modern, private-press printing. Lantern-slides are worse than useless for conveying the sensuous delight of fine printing on hand-made paper.

What else should the future citizen know, if he is to know

anything at all about typography? This much of its history: that it is at once the youngest medieval craft and the oldest instance in Europe of design for mass-production (apart from its ancestors, coinage and playing cards); that the date of its invention is taken as the beginning of the modern epoch; that its German pioneers were frankly attempting to imitate costly manuscripts, but that the humanists of the Renaissance soon devised a style of letter that could not be mistaken for calligraphy; with a number of other provocative facts which you will find in Stanley Morison's *The Art of Printing*, the best general eye-opener I know.

So much for the claims of typography on precious hours of a general-survey course. Now let us suppose either that the students have become convinced, by that brief appetizer, that there is matter here for a year's study, or that the Art Department has come to the same conclusion by reasoning. The matter is there; but again the question must be faced: 'Granted that this is good training in taste and judgement, wherein is it *better than* this or that other course in appreciation — *from the point of view of the secondary school?*'

That last phrase must be stressed, for it justifies our returning at this point to our general consideration of the nature of typography. Now we must ask what there is about the study of typography that specially helps the art master who is not teaching a trade but is specially helping the secondary school in its primary task of educating[1] human beings.

[1] The notion that 'educate' has some connection with a Latin word meaning 'lead out' is being rapidly exploded. It meant to 'bring up' — as a plant is brought up out of the soil by sun and moisture. All that is modern in education stems from this restoration of the original meaning of the word.

It will be necessary to show what makes typography valuable to the school which is *neither* trying to show a few talented young people how to earn money as star-performers, *nor* offering mere 'training-in-admiration' to all the rest, and planting them down in the audience, as if their whole duty to the arts consisted of developing exquisite sensibilities and quivering at the 'impact' of this or that masterpiece. It is altogether too common an assumption that John Citizen has no choice between doing and being done by in the arts, and that his only shred of *responsibility* for modern industrial design is that he constitutes one tiny element of 'the market' for what is good. Wherever else in the world we tolerate that arbitrary division of sheep from goats, artists from 'audience', designers from 'public' or 'market', we dare not tolerate it in secondary-school education, where the primary object is to nourish the sense of *responsibility* against all the machine-age's temptations to irresponsibility. Hence it is advisable to notice at this point why training in typographic design has special or unique value as a means of illustrating the citizen's sense of responsibility towards design.

Printing, unlike most modern industries, is not centred in certain recognized manufacturing areas, nor does the future of design for printing rest in the hands of a few big industrial concerns, as in the case of textiles or pottery. It is not, like the fine arts, a special glory of the metropolitan cities; some of the most famous printing offices are found in small provincial towns where the rate of pay for skilled craftsmen is relatively low. There is no strict co-relation between the size of a printing office and the quality of its products. A fairly small office may achieve national or international fame among connoisseurs if

its proprietor, or a member of its staff, *or one of its regular customers*, happens to be a brilliant typographic designer.

There is no other industrial art of our day that is so accessible, so quickly influenced for good by the common citizen in any part of the community. I can think of no other branch of applied art besides typography in which an ordinary citizen — say, a small shopkeeper in a small provincial town — can hope to have the thrill of causing a local reformation of taste which can have national or even international repercussions.

We are dealing here with an art which is a profound interest to students of the history of the arts in the twentieth century. In this age of mechanical mass-production, when practically every artifact is offered ready-made, *printing is still made to order*. Your shoes and your window curtains and your breakfast china are all things which you bought ready-made. You were not consulted on how they should look. Their design is the result of wary guesswork by manufacturers; and they were guessing not as to what *you* as a person wanted but as to what might be wanted by a minimum of ten thousand people. On the walls of your living-room are pictures. Probably most of them are mechanical reproductions, mass-produced by their publishers on the assumption that there would be at least a thousand customers for each subject. But even if they are original paintings, the chances are a hundred to one that you acquired them ready-made. The painter never asked you what you wanted. He, or rather his agent, presented you with a *fait accompli*; you could either buy it, or go climb a tree. But your daughter's wedding announcement, or your school's letterhead and prospectus are things made specially to order. They are commissioned works — in a world which has elsewhere almost

forgotten how to commission skilled men to produce specific things.

'Printing' is the accepted covering term for all those operations which normally take place — nay, which *must* take place — under the roof of the printing office. (The fact that it is called a printing 'office' shows that it is concerned with the multiplication of words by type, not with calico-printing or the printing of cinema film.) These operations include type-composition, proof-reading, printing (known as machining), folding and trimming, etc. In the nature of the work there must also be a department for estimating costs, and at least some rudimentary facilities for showing a hesitant customer the 'style' in which the job can be set for a given price. These facilities may consist of a dog-eared file of sample jobs ('Something in this style?') or they may take the form of a layout department bursting with ingenious new ideas.

'Typography' is really the name for *all* the operations — mental, manual, and mechanical — which go to the making of a printed edition of anything from a luxurious book to a cheap handbill. But it is easy to see how the word acquired its special reference to design. It is because the work of designing the thing is the one 'operation' for which the master printer is not necessarily responsible. If I were to say in a review that a book was 'badly printed' I would have to be ready to show precisely how many misprints, and what faults of registration, bad press-work, etc, justified that attack on the printer *as manufacturer*. But if I were to speak of the book as 'a deplorable piece of typography' that might only mean that some crackpot author had persuaded some novelty-seeking publisher to tell some astonished but obedient printer to set up the

whole book in sans-serif by way of making it look 'modern'.

It is a point of vivid interest to art teachers that *the final responsibility for the appearance of any piece of printing always rests upon the man who commissioned it.* If it turns out to be an irresistibly attractive example of fitness for purpose, or a subtly adroit solution of some new problem, carried through to the last detail by good printing, then the customer gets the credit: *whether* for having known enough to design the thing intelligently in consultation with a good printer, *or* for having had the good taste, the knowledge, and the courage to seek out an intelligent 'creative printer' (or consultant) and turn the whole problem of design and production over to him. If for any reason the finished result is a failure, it is the customer who is to blame. Either he was so ignorant, so lacking in taste and judgement, as to nod feebly when the nearest price-cutting printer said 'Something in this style?' or else he was so 'half-educated' that he spent all his thought upon half the problem: either working hard upon the 'layout' (*design*) and trusting its *production* to some dispirited cheapjack — or else putting all the emphasis on the *production* (e.g. calling for the finest paper, lavish use of colour, exquisite craftsmanship in setting and machining) without ever stopping to ask how it could be 'pulled together' as a *design.*

From the art teacher's point of view, the totally ignorant man is not morally to blame for afflicting the community with yet another piece of pretentiously-stupid design or bad production. It is the fault of a society that surrounded him from infancy with ugly things and neglected his education. But when the horrid result is due to *half*-education — when it is either something 'de luxe' wrecked by incoherent design, or else

something cleverly conceived but sloppily executed, then the blame narrows down to one section of the community: those concerned with art education. For in either case, the fellow was evidently taught *something*. In the first case, he somewhere picked up the moral courage and respect for craftsmanship that made him cry 'Spare no expense': why was he denied the complementary training in taste, in respect for consistency, harmony, ingenuity in design? In the other case, how did it happen that a man could acquire such good taste and judgement in matters of design and yet remain ignorantly contemptuous of the part played by the manufacturer and the quality of the materials?

There is no art teacher worth his salt who can hear either of those questions without ruefully admitting where the fault lies. Let us not hesitate to generalize: the first case applies equally well to the stockbroker who has 'spared no expense' to have his wife's portrait painted by the finest portraitist that money can buy, and the second case applies to any flashy little 'stylist' who is paid to think up clever designs that will distract the shopper's attention from evidences of sweated labour on shoddy stuff.

Wherever you look, in any fine or applied art, you will find cases to illustrate the difference between the results of sheer *ignorance* (not even knowing that such and such an art exists), and the results of *heretical training* (in the strict sense of heresy: faith in the part at the expense of the whole). It happens that typography offers peculiarly memorable ways of illustrating those two primary faults — ignorance and half-knowledge — and of going on to distinguish between the two sorts of half-knowledge: the 'spare no expense' sort that results in the

conspicuous waste of costly skill and stuffs and the 'spare no ingenuity' sort which produces the streamlined shoddy.

What makes typography 'memorable' is that your instances and your practice projects can all deal with actual problems which your average secondary-school pupil is very likely to encounter during his adult life. The poorest clerk may turn out to be the only man in the firm who knows why the firm's printing looks unimpressive — and what to do about it. The hardest-working doctor or solicitor may treat himself to the thrill of designing and commissioning an enchanting little Christmas booklet.

Here you have one branch of modern industrial design which permits John Citizen, at the cost of a few guineas, to march boldly into a modern manufacturing concern and say what he wants, without the slightest fear of being smilingly interrupted and ushered out with 'Sorry, but there's no market for that sort of thing . . . the public isn't educated up to that yet', etc. If he has had only a few hours' training in *seeing the difference* between deplorable, mediocre, good, and brilliant typography (just enough training to rescue him from the mal-education he has had from ugly street-signs, vulgarly pretentious 'art printing', etc) then he will know how to find the right printer; and though he will still have to be told and shown what he really wants, he will be told deferentially, consulted, and generally treated as a patron of the art. If he has had some months' training in typographic design, then he will know how to take part in the sort of design-conference that great designers dream of: a conference with wise, experienced craftsmen and technicians who intimately know the stuffs and skills, the costs and techniques — men who know too much about too few things to be

very good as designers, but men who are worth courting and consulting for what they alone know as craftsmen.

Or think of printing as an art, a branch of skilled making. Well, it is one art in which the ancient concept of the educated responsible patron has never been forgotten or laughed to scorn. You cannot teach the history of the arts without reference to the part of the patron. You can 'bring it down to modern times' without any need to refer to the pitiful little millionaire who pays some expert to tell him what's 'the thing' to collect and who the 'right artists' are. Tell them instead how a tired printer prayed that just once before he died he could meet one customer whose first words would be not 'How low a price . . . ?' but 'This is what I can afford to spend and this is what I want', and how the prayer was heard: some village Jean Grolier drifted in, coaxed the printer into putting in some decent faces, gave the dispirited compositors something that put them on their mettle, and so started off such a transformation scene that now the connoisseurs say: 'I know one thing about that little town — there's quite a celebrated little printing office there.'

We are now ready to discuss the general syllabus of a year's course in the appreciation of typography. Your first action should be to call upon the best master printer in town and ask him to arrange for you to meet the local committee of the Joint Industrial Council (of the Printing Trades), to talk over the course. Be careful to explain at once that you are NOT starting a 'printing class' and that there will be no question of producing the school magazine by blackleg child-labour, etc. Point out what you will really be doing — from his point of view: training future print-buyers of the sort that any good printer

longs to work for. Offer to keep an eye peeled for any bright
and nimble lad who would like to be indentured as an appren-
tice-compositor. All this establishes your *bona fides*, and you will
find the master printer only too eager to know how he can
co-operate with you. Before the end of the year you will be
arranging tours for the young people over a good printing
office: one for a general glamorous impression of the whole
place, the second the climax of the whole course, when the class
has designed some piece of printed matter and is coming to see
it printed. Meanwhile you want him to obtain for you some
good specimens of typefaces, and some alphabets of actual type
to be used with an inking-pad as stamps. If, as is most likely,
you find him entering whole-heartedly into the spirit of the
thing, suggest that when the class has got down to its 'project'
of planning some actual piece for use (e.g. the school Sports
Day programme) that master printer should visit the classroom
in character as printers' representative, ready to explain why it
will cost them 20 per cent more to use a second colour, etc — in
short, to engage in one of these designer-technician conferences
that we spoke of. Without promising anything, I can tell you
that printers go to a touching amount of trouble to rise to such
a challenge as this, once they are certain that you are not teach-
ing people to cry for the moon, or to get good work on
the cheap.

The first term should be devoted to the study of typefaces,
and all that one has to know about the history of epigraphic and
calligraphic lettering, in order to appreciate the best typefaces. I
should be inclined to start the whole thing off with a challenge
to the class to cut a poster type for use in posters of school
festivities: an alphabet of capital letters two inches high to be

cut in linoleum or wood and used as stamps. Let them discover, by argument and comparison and legibility tests, why the classic roman inscriptional capitals work better than any 'fancy' letters. This initial project makes them realize that a type is a *cut* thing, not a *drawn* thing, and that an alphabet or fount is a collection of characters which must each preserve its individual 'character' (e.g. the worst thing an O can do is to lose its round-ness and try to look rectilinear, for then you might mistake it for a D): but that it is also a collection of shapes meant to be used together, bound together by subtle consistencies of treat-ment. Give them some notion of why classic capitals were designed as problems in geometry. 'Euclid alone has looked on beauty bare', and it will purify their taste after the sight of so much whimsy-whamsy lettering to work out those two-inch letters with straight-edge and compass. As Mr Stanley Morison once said: 'Imagine yourself on a swaying scaffold in a high wind, chiselling three-foot letters on a triumphal arch, and you will understand how the rule and compass came into it.'

Then show them how minuscules developed out of those capitals; tell them how Alcuin the Yorkshireman, in the great days of Charlemagne, standardized the minuscule which was revived six centuries later by the humanists. From that point the pupils can literally 'trace' the history of roman lower-case, from 36-pt. alphabets of Bembo, Caslon, Bodoni, and Times New Roman. When you are sure they know what serifs are *for*, and why it aids legibility to have gradual thickening on curves, they will be ready to appreciate a good sans-serif for what it is: a type never intended for continuous reading, but useful for jobbing, because all the strokes are of the same thickness (hence the 'variant weights' such as extra-light, bold, bold condensed,

etc, harmonize perfectly with the normal weight). After tracing an alphabet of a typeface you will always recognize that face by name wherever you encounter it, in any size; you have the 'feel' of it, and if you are in any doubt you know what earmarks to look for.

In the second term they should have a layman's survey of printing methods and processes, and some glimpse of the endlessly fascinating subject of paper: its surfaces, tones, substance, standard sizes and classic subdivisions — quarto, octavo and the rest. Let them also compile a big album, a typographic portrait of the age, made up of as many different kinds of printed matter as they can collect, even down to handbills and tram-tickets. They are all 'problems' in design and fitness for purpose. 'What is wrong with this piece? How would you redesign it to make it fulfil the intention better?' At this point the English teacher will begin to cheer, for good training in typography begins with inculcating respect for the right ordering of words and meanings.

By the beginning of the third term they should be ready for practical training in layout and the planning of printed editions. They might visit a printing office and hear words of wisdom from the foreman-compositor, the proof-reader, the foreman of the machine-room. They might write an account of what they saw and were told, as a charming little 'bread-and butter letter' to the master printer and his craftsmen. The printer writes back to them: the letter gratified him deeply and he is thinking of making an attractive little illustrated booklet of it; would the class care to help him design it?

As you see, it is something more than that course in decent lettering and calligraphy which is an essential part of a liberal

education. At the end of it the pupil is not only able to see the mean hatefulness of bad street-signs and ugly type, and to see the bumptiousness of the sort of handwriting that 'reveals an interesting personality' without revealing what the scrawler was trying to convey. He is also able to see what the untrained eye can never see, is not supposed to see: the wonderfully subtle appeal to the subconscious mind which is made by a piece of good typography. 'Printing should be invisible' — to the reader while he is reading. The best typefaces, the best designers and draughtsmen, conspire to focus his mind through their polished-crystal window. If he has no notion of how the words got on the paper he will express his appreciation quite unconsciously, simply by starting to read. But it is pleasant to be able to see what art and skill went to that feat of self-effacement. It is good to be able to follow and applaud the big-scale 're-stylings' of magazines, newspapers, and industrial typography; and it is still better to applaud and instigate typographic reforms in one's own community, on however small a scale.

As we know, the spirited master printers are looking to the schools for help at this crisis in printing history, when the agent-designer is beginning to elbow-in between printer and customer. So far all the appeal has been to the technical and art schools, for help in training intelligent apprentice-compositors to practise layout and print-planning. The object has been to make it unnecessary for the print-buyer to pay an agent's fee in order to get attractive design. 'That never used to be necessary', argues the printer, with truth; but he forgets that in previous centuries the problem of 'styling' the job was settled in advance because every customer knew what he wanted (i.e. had a clear notion of what a handbill looked like and was content that it

should look like that); also there were very few typefaces, nothing *but* hand-made paper — in fact, scarcely any opportunity to go wrong. There is no hope of returning to those days. It is a waste of breath for the printer to say to his customers, 'Give me the manuscript and trust me to turn out a good job, looking the way that sort of job ought to look'. He is too often talking to men who must desperately try to persuade the public that Brand A is 'different' from Rival Brand B. No, if the agent 'typotect' is to be eliminated it can only be by raising up a generation of informed patrons, customers who know what they want, know good design and good value when they see it, and know the money's worth of the fair price. It is too late to do that in building. But in printing it is not too late — if the secondary schools weigh in on the side of that august trade to which they owe their very existence.

One last word about typography in the elementary school. If it be true that the object of art training in such schools is to encourage self-expression, then there is no room in it for typography. In more senses than one, you can make a bigger splash with a paint-brush than you can with a pica-rule. Let the younger children have their fun as artists, making whole things by hand and 'showing what they mean'. They will then be ready to encounter architecture (where the first question is, what the community means), and typography, where the object is to let the *author's* meaning shine through. Meanwhile, simply try to guard the babes from mal-education of the eye. You can scarcely help it if their school-building is an eyesore, though it means extra work when they come to the appreciation of architecture. You *can* do something about ugly schoolbooks and signs that 'condition' children to a tolerance of ugly

print. You can rage aloud, and sooner or later something will be done about it. For there is this to say of typography when you are comparing it with architecture: when something ignoble or silly has been inflicted on the community, it does not require a parachute-mine or an earthquake to get rid of it.

ARTISTS AND CRAFTSMEN

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HOW TYPOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATIONS CAN BE SHOWN TO THE PUBLIC

THE NEW Exhibition and Lecture Room on the top floor of the Monotype School building was opened in February 1950 with an exhibition of typographic restyling, consisting of 150 representative pieces of printed matter — from books and periodicals to time-tables and leaflets — which had been transformed in appearance by intelligent layout and good typefaces. Each exhibit was flanked with an example of how that same piece looked before it was restyled.

A selection of the 'befores and afters' from this exhibition has since been shown in thirteen American and five Continental cities, and in many parts of Britain. The contrast method has everywhere proved its value, and has been successfully used by other bodies, notably the Council of Industrial Design. It offers a solution to a problem which arises wherever there is need to show the general public what typographic design means, what importance it has as a branch of industrial design, and how it is working today in the service of every kind of organization that uses the printed word.

That problem has always been one of selection: and it is not so much an aesthetic as a moral problem. There are certain kinds of printed matter which are natural show-pieces — gaily

coloured booklet covers, striking labels, experimental title-
pages, impressive letterheads, and such 'fine editions' as have to
justify their price by their exceptional beauty. A show consist-
ing largely of such examples will undoubtedly serve what is,
after all, the very first purpose of any exhibition of good
printing to the public, namely to draw the apathetic visitor
across the threshold by the sight of something that looks
interesting at any distance: and thereby to register on his mind
that there *is* such a thing as Printing, that words and pictures
do not hatch themselves on the page but have to be put there
by human skill and teamwork — and that the business of
putting them there calls for creative intelligence over and above
mere technical ability.

But such a selection would give the public little or no idea
of what typography, as distinct from printing in general, is
achieving today — or even what its designers are trying to do.

Though the word 'typography' no longer means merely
'letterpress', it does still refer to the use of printers' type for the
communication of messages. It is word-printing as distinct
from picture-printing. The *art* of typography consists in using
the right type in such a way as to convey the message or sense
as clearly and pleasantly as possible. But it all starts with the
decision to use the cast metal characters called type instead of
calling in the calligrapher, hand-letterer, or engraver. In 'dis-
play' work that decision may sometimes be arrived at reluc-
tantly, merely on economic grounds. The designer of even the
cleverest typographic letterhead may ruefully admit that a steel
engraving, of equal merit as a design, would have been more
impressive. The agency which has scoured Europe for some-
thing really new in the way of a display face may, after seeing

that same face in a rival advertisement, wish that it had paid a brilliant letterer to think up something specially for that campaign. But when it comes to continuous reading-matter, or reference-matter, then the use of printers' type is justified on aesthetic grounds alone, quite apart from its cheapness and speed. If skilled calligraphers were ten-a-penny, the book reader would still prefer type, above all for its consistency. There is no slight human variation between one letter g and another to nag at his attention. He would also prefer type for its clarity and sharpness of detail over photographic reduction of either hand-lettering or typewriting. Hence it is in 'solid matter' that type is supreme as a medium. There, the typographic designer is at work on his own home ground, doing the very sort of thing which the decorative or pictorial artist is least able to do — namely to achieve 'transparency' in the printed page and to make reading-matter look more readable.

But there the exhibitor is on the other horn of his dilemma, for a collection of 'pure typography' will have little in it to beckon the visitor from across the room. Those laymen who do come within reading distance will simply do what the cunning typographer always intended them to do: they will *begin to read*, taking no more notice of the type and layout than they would take of polished window-panes between them and a view. When the 'view', the content, turns out to be uninteresting or even frightening to the man in the street — e.g. when the text sets forth some abstruse problem in physics — the visitor will turn his eyes away from it as soon as possible, without stopping to ask what there was about that page that made him think that it *might* be interesting. If on the other hand he finds himself looking into some literary or poetic scene

that he can enjoy, he reads on, quite unconscious of the printer's part in enhancing that pleasure. What he is more likely to notice is the annoyance of not being able to reach into the case and turn the page! It is almost the test of good typography that it should tempt the hands as well as the eyes, and look pathetically out of place behind a pane of glass or mounted on a screen.

How then is the typographic 'story' to be told to the general public?

To the initiates it is an exciting story, for it has to do with great and widespread changes in the look of the printed word — in those fields where improvement was most needed. When a publisher of fine limited editions offers his highly critical public a book of the quality that they expected for their three guineas, that is a pleasant event but hardly a news event: it can never be as dramatic or significant as the appearance of (say) a school arithmetic in a typographic dress much more attractive than its too-tolerant public ever dared to expect. In that case some publisher has been led by conviction, or forced by competition, to abandon the notion that school-books ought to look dull and grim, that the sort of medicine which does you most good is that which tastes bad. That change of attitude is part of a general change which has also affected the architecture of school buildings, and the texts and methods of the teachers.

Again, it is not 'news' when a manufacturer puts out handsome printed literature, and when he lavishes care on his advertising brochures everyone knows that he does it because it pays. But when Her Majesty's Stationery Office calls in some of the best typographic talent of our day, and brilliantly restyles its whole vast range of publications, that *is* news. It means

that 'official printing' is no longer being considered as some-
thing that can afford to look dreary. Today it must look worthy
of the nation that produced it.

An exhibition of current typography should be, first and
foremost, a report on the ways in which the typographic
renaissance has changed and improved the 'look of the printed
word' throughout the land. And there lies the way out of the
exhibitor's dilemma, for it is only necessary to reveal the nature
of the changes to give the whole show the dramatic value it
needs.

From any distance, a set of 'before and after' exhibits beckons
the layman. 'Look here upon this picture and on this' is one of
the most famous theatrical devices in history — understandably,
for it reaches deep into human psychology. Long before he has
approached to reading distance the visitor has been automati-
cally reminded, by the sight of the two versions of the same
piece, that what he is being asked to look at now is not (for
instance) simply a decent-looking parish magazine, but a piece
of typographic evidence that someone has thought it worth
while to take a parish magazine seriously as a problem in layout.
The mere fact that the contrasted jobs are in effect 'the same
thing' *as texts* makes it clear that the second is being shown *as
good typography*. It is as if the same view were being seen
through two windows, one perfectly polished and effectively
framed and curtained, the other 'as it was' before the proud
householder moved in. In such a case the beholder would still
look first at the view, just as he looks first to see what the
printed page is saying: but in doing so he would realize that 'the
same view' was somehow not the same through grimy panes.

The most uninformed visitor will at least feel some curiosity

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when he finds himself challenged to tell good from less good; and though he may claim to know nothing about the mysteries of type and print he very soon realizes that at least he can 'see the difference' in this or that pair of examples — which is much better than knowing and caring nothing about the subject. The layman is actually the quickest to grasp the broader implications of a restyling. He is the parent whose children are getting those brighter school-books; he is the parishioner who ought to feel responsible for the starveling look of his church paper; he is the taxpayer whose standards of taste have been so complimented by H.M.S.O. Let him but see — by contrast — what sort of thing has been happening to the printed words that he reads every day, and he will soon enough see what it has to do with *him*.

II

TYPOGRAPHIC RESTYLINGS AS STUDY MATERIAL

It is not only in exhibitions to the lay public that 'before and after' examples of restyling are proving useful. Teachers of layout in printing schools are now eagerly collecting them as study material, because they give the student an opportunity to imagine himself in the position of a professional typographer faced with the problem of transforming a given job, or investing a series of jobs with a new look of consistency, ease, and distinction. The student can ask why this and that thing was done, and even why the whole was considered worth the sacrifice of standing formes. That is particularly good mental training for young people who are working in composing-rooms.

For five centuries the composing-room, 'the shop', has concentrated on teaching the apprentice *how* to do things, with the least possible reference to *why* they are done this way and not that way. When Aldus Manutius was in effect restyling book typography for Western Europe, his apprentices were probably treated like any other apprentices of that day from Michelangelo's down to the tinsmith's: that is, they were allowed the privilege of watching skilled men doing things 'the right way', and the privilege of being cuffed if they failed to observe and imitate their betters closely enough. The paternal cuffs, and the commands to sweep the floor and bring in the beer, were (and still are) based on the principle that human beings value and respect their treasures in proportion to what they paid for them, and that the price of Skill is sweat and humility. Aldus's apprentices, unlike most other lads of the time, had first of all to know how to spell: not merely mother-tongue but Latin, where spelling and orthography were no more flexible than they are today in English. From that day onwards apprentices were taught to follow copy 'even if it went out the window', without asking questions. They were taught typographic style, or what we now call layout, by a similar method. '*This is how* you set up a title-page . . . deal with a chapter-opening . . . compose a handbill . . . a time-table . . . ', etc. The apprentice had no need to ask why. The reason was obvious enough then — and even today it holds good in principle. The first thing a customer demands of the printer is that the job should be recognizable for the *kind* of thing that it is. A book must not look like a newspaper, an auction-catalogue must look like an auction-catalogue, and so on. All the typographic reformers and restylers from Aldus's day to our own have respected that

cardinal principle that the book or job should be recognizable
at a glance as the kind of book, or kind of job, that it is. But in
the composing-room that principle was applied very literally
by teaching apprentices to follow conventional styles. That was
safe enough as long as the customer had a clear image of what a
title-page or a handbill ought to look like, and trusted the
printer to make it look like that. The printer did know, and
saw to it that his apprentices knew.

But before the close of the last century, several things hap-
pened to undermine the printer's confidence in his traditional
styles. First the advertisers asked why their newspaper spaces
had to be set in agate, in what we now call 'smalls' style. Dis-
played advertisements came in, and fought with each other to
catch the reader's eye by differentness, novelty of setting. Then
the newspaper proprietors began asking why their main head-
ings should not stream across two or more columns. Then,
much later, the book publishers and large-scale print-buyers
began asking why they should stick to Modern No. 1 and Old
Style No. 2 for text faces, when better ones were becoming
available on Monotype machines. In 1880 any printer could
have explained that the cases for his roman-up-to-pica took up
a lot of floor space; that when antiquarian-minded publishers
had insisted on his laying in an *alternative* roman in the 'old
style' he had had to double the size of his case-room; and that
he could never find room for a third series. Mechanical com-
position changed all that. The printer found that the customers'
'Why?' was a rhetorical question; they stayed not for an
answer but told him what faces to put in. From every side, 'the
shop' was badgered by that *Why?* which is the starting-point
of all industrial design and styling; and its craftsmen had been

indoctrinated for centuries not to ask why. The indoctrination had been no mere tyrannical whim of the masters. It was the printer's earliest customers — theologians, mathematicians, poets, lawyers, and others—who made the composing-room a stronghold of conservatism.

So the duty of training the critical faculties fell upon the printing schools. In time it became the correct thing to 'teach the apprentice to think' about design and styling. As long as this meant only teaching future Art Comps to think up something better for jobbing than the Leicester Free Style of the 'nineties, 'the shop' saw no harm in it. But it was a different matter when the apprentices began to bring back from their evening classes layouts that seemed to question the sanctity of the prevailing styles of bookwork, tabular work, and general commercial printing. Was the school training up young iconoclasts? If so, a corrective snub was in order. 'We don't do it that way here, my lad', said a generation of oldsters. To this day, that phrase has bitter familiarity to teachers of layout classes. They know how important it still is to alert the students to current typographic reforms without sounding (to the shop) like wild-eyed reformers.

Here a collection of 'befores and afters' comes to the rescue of the teacher. A successful typographic restyling is a *fait accompli*. The teachers and students may use it to deduce just why each change was called for; but to the conservative senior craftsman the point is that it *was* 'called for', and paid for, by some actual print-buyer. What the composing-room dreads is not a change of style, but changeableness and irresolution in the customer. As Mr Stanley Morison has said, 'The printer wants the customer to make up his mind — and he wants him to have

a mind to make up': in other words, the ability to reach sound decisions through reasoning. In analysing the whys-and-wherefores of a major restyling the student is not learning to be 'unconventional' in his attitude to the printed word; he is rather learning what Convention really means in typography and why it is respected. A good restyling shows the result of a convention, a 'coming together', of customer, designer, and printer to agree on certain principles of layout and type choice with constant reference to the ultimate reader: and the student has much to learn from asking all the different 'whys' that must have been asked by the different people involved — and deducing the answers.

Unfortunately it is none too easy to build up a good collection of 'befores and afters'. When, for example, the proprietors of a chain of hotels decide to make all their printed matter as inviting to the eye as their entrance-lobbies or dining-tables, and when they realize how well they have succeeded in doing so, they next wish that they had thought of it long before; at least they are not at all anxious to remind the public how recently they have had that change of heart! By the time the news has reached the collector of restylings, he will be lucky if his request for a 'before' produces even a tattered file copy — precious now for its rarity as well as for its usefulness as an object lesson. The Monotype Corporation's own collection includes a number of 'befores' which are the only surviving copies of the job as it was — and therefore priceless as examples. The would-be collector must have a wide personal acquaintanceship amongst the typographic designers to get advance news of restylings — outside the periodical field, where changes of dress can easily be documented.

Fortunately for the teachers of layout in printing schools, they have all had a chance to acquire the Examination Syllabus pamphlets of the City and Guilds of London Institute before and after they were restyled in 1948 by Mr Charles Pickering. There could be no better starting-point for a study of restyling, for two reasons.

In the first place, the nature of the job shows that this was a 'once and for all' change, in other words, one that had to be argued out in terms of the rights and wrongs of legibility, appropriateness, etc, without any reference to what happened to be fashionable at the moment. It is quite true to say that the earlier example looks 'out of date'; but that only means that certain practices (such as using a related bold instead of a clumsy Clarendon, or dropping the redundant full point after a heading) are now fairly widespread. But the designers who introduced them did so for sound reasons and not simply out of restlessness.

In the second place, this City and Guilds restyling shows the student what can be done simply by substituting a better combination of typefaces and improving the layout with no help from better-quality paper, a more impressive format, or any other factor that comes under the head of 'spend more and get more'. Here, both pieces are the work of the same printer, using the same machines and methods. It made not the slightest difference to the Monotype casters whether the molten metal happened to be cast in a first-rate face or a mediocre one; nor was it any harder for the composing-room to follow clear pencil layouts and to interpret sound new directives than to look up the old models. The whole immense improvement can, therefore, be credited to those who alone could have taken the

blame if it had failed; the Institute for having the sense to take its own medicine (it holds examinations in typography!) and the designer, for perceiving the basic intentions and working them out in typographic terms. Hence it is the kind of example which helps to clarify the distinction between what the printer means by 'improving the quality' of the job (with special emphasis on better materials and workmanship, which necessarily increases the cost) and what the designer means by 'making it more effective' — within a given limit of expenditure. The distinction can easily be blurred because there are so many jobs which do genuinely need to be improved in 'quality' and it is part of the designer's general responsibility to argue for better materials whenever they are really justified. But both the student and the customer have the right to ask, first of all, what can be done in the way of making the thing more effective without increasing the cost. Once they are quite clear on that point, they will be that much more ready to see the possible advantages of a bigger outlay.

Mr E. Sydney, a distinguished librarian, restated the text of a leaflet about the Leyton Public Libraries, and then sent it to The Curwen Press, where it was typographically redesigned with admirable simplicity and directness. The contrast shows the ineffectiveness of rule underlines for emphasis and fussy decoration. Here the customer presumably 'paid more to get more' — not only better paper and a block, but all the special services that can be expected from a great printing house which is also a typographic centre; everything from sound advice on design through to impeccable machining. All the printed literature of this library has now been similarly transformed, and the results show how a free public library, the cultural

centre of its community (and in wartime its maid-of-all-work) ought to look upon the printed word — as something important enough to be dressed with pride and distinction. The Public Libraries of Hornsey and Westminster offer further good sets of examples. There will be many more, now that an elementary study of typography is recognized as a door to professional advancement for librarians. The simplification of booklet-covers reminds us that the typographer has exercised his right to criticize the 'wording' in the interests of quicker conveyance of the sense. That is the last thing that a printer or compositor would ever do. Any printer who asks whether the copy is in fact saying all (or only) what needs to be said in that particular area, is thinking as a designer — and flouting five centuries of craft tradition. The proposed change of copy may or may not be accepted in the specific case, but it must at least be considered if there is any *prima facie* case for it, since restyling means thinking-out the job afresh from the primary question, 'What is this printed thing supposed to be doing?'

The National Union of Teachers must have asked itself at some stage what its printed literature was supposed to be doing, apart from keeping its members and potential members informed about its services. If each piece also had the duty of representing the Union as a proud and intelligent body, and actually combating the image of teachers as people contented to be underpaid and reconciled to sparse living, then there was reason enough to call in as good a designer as Mr Ruari McLean for an effective restyling. The Workers' Educational Association provides an equally good instance of typography emphasizing the 'look of pride'.

So far we have mentioned restylings which were each carried

out by a single printing office. But some of the earliest large-scale reforms come under the head of 'typographic standardizations': that is, rules as to the choice and use of type laid down by the customer for the guidance of any number of contract printers in different parts of the country. The general style evolved by the London and North Eastern Railway, and the traditional Victorian style which it replaced, have already been illustrated in *The Monotype Recorder*. The change affected ninety printing contracts; it was largely responsible for the development of Monotype Gill Sans from its original titling and roman lower-case into a 'family' of twenty-four related series. This may be taken as an extreme example of the customer exercising his responsibility for design, not in terms of what Messrs X (the best printers he can think of) are willing and able to do, but rather in terms of what he can force even Messrs Y and Z to do under pain of losing the contract. That wary and perhaps cynical attitude may have some bearing on the popularity of Gill Sans as an almost foolproof typeface — and on the whole movement towards stark simplicity which characterized jobbing typography reforms in the 'thirties.

The restyling movement has, as we have seen, tended to reveal the master printer as a man who *cannot be blamed* if he has not bothered to tell the customer that there are much better types available today, and better ways of using them, than there were in 1908. But the customer who makes that discovery is in the mood to blame somebody, if only himself, for not having noticed it before. Sometimes the printer suffers a sudden loss of contract. That is unfair. But when the customer does take the blame himself he thereby takes the credit for any improvement, and then the whole trade suffers a loss of prestige. Certain

printers, thinking as typographers, have been far from willing to get clear of any blame (and credit) on matters of design. One printer (Messrs Tillotson), getting discontented with the look of a popular pocket reference booklet, transformed it after some technical experiment into a charming job in Perpetua with its Bold. There are many similar instances, including a most interesting group or chain of restylings by Messrs Unwin Bros. of Woking — a 'chain reaction' set off by the success of their redressing of a school magazine.

The one most resounding event in typographic reform during the past twenty years was the complete redressing of *The Times* in a composition series which has had world-wide acclaim, and a range of brilliant titlings, bolds, etc. The story has been told in *The Monotype Recorder* and elsewhere.[1] Meanwhile periodical restyling has proceeded apace. When the Corporation's collection was being shown in America, one 'before and after' aroused special interest because it showed how a little parish magazine had been revivified by the vicar (the Rev. Guy Daniel) with the help of Mr Ruari McLean. Incidentally, its tiny circulation was more than doubled despite a well-justified increase of the price to 4d. In Mr J. Blair-Fish's book *Better Parish Magazines* (Church Assembly) and in the vigorous articles and work of Mr Toye Vise, one may see that the phrase 'parish magazine' is no longer necessarily a term of contempt amongst typographers.

No one pair of examples can begin to indicate the scope and complexity of the H.M.S.O. restyling of official publications,

[1] Notably in a travelling exhibition (the first ever devoted to a typeface as an event in the history of Industrial Design) organized by the British Council for exhibition abroad.

of which the most significant 'befores and afters' were shown for the first time in the Corporation's exhibition, through the kindness of Mr H. G. Carter, the typographer most responsible for carrying out the general principles laid down by the Committee headed by Sir Francis Meynell. *The Penrose Annual* for 1950, in an article by Mr Charles Batey, gave particulars and illustrations of great value to students. There are many examples characteristic of the change and the new attitude to 'official printing' which they reveal.

III

THE PENCIL DRAWS A VICIOUS CIRCLE

There are some two hundred vocational training colleges in Great Britain which offer instruction in typographic design and layout — whether to 'trade classes' of apprentice- or journeyman-compositors or to men and women outside the printing trade as part of their training in commercial design. The standard of instruction for 'trade' students is steadily rising. In some cases apprentice classes have the chance to collaborate with 'art' classes on joint projects. The printing schools are consciously trying to arrest, and reverse, the apparent fate of the craftsman-compositor in the age of productivity: the fate of being turned from a responsible type-mason into an obedient 'hod-carrier' for the layout man.

They are not succeeding. A generation ago craft-proud compositors were still capable of resenting on principle the sight of a foolproof pencil layout from the customer: the kind which

gives the executant no chance whatever to 'use his head', but actually assumes that he will need explicit instruction about word- and letter-spacing and the other minutiae of good crafts-manship. Today the compositor finds himself in a position in which he can only hope and pray that the next job *will* be accompanied by a really foolproof layout. His indignation is now reserved for the inefficient layout, the one which looks at first glance like a clear set of time-saving working directions, but turns out to contain miscalculations as to the length of the copy, slight inconsistencies in style, demands for non-existent sizes of type, or for '18-pt. small caps', or other puzzlers which are made so much more exasperating to the compositor by the fact that they are set out so officiously. The craftsman perceives that he is dealing with a pernickety person who has read a book, if not several books, on layout, and owns a pica gauge, and in general has every intention of getting his own way. The time required to discover what the fellow really means and to think out the nearest practicable thing that can actually be done, mounts up distressingly on the time-docket by which com-positors account for every half-hour or quarter-hour which they spend on any job.

An obviously amateurish layout — e.g. one lettered by some-one who has not noticed that M is wider than N — would have been spotted as such from the start by the printer's representa-tive. It would be dealt with, after due queryings, as a sketched *suggestion* that called for help just as clearly as if the customer has simply blocked out his notion of what he wanted and had scribbled across it 'something like this' or 'this is just to show what words I want *brought out*'.

It is a new thing to have to put such diffident remarks as those

on any rough sketch to which they apply. Yet I have been assured by one whose opinion I respect that in eight out of ten printing offices the sight of the word *Meeting* written out large by a customer who forgot to use block capitals, would be taken as an instruction to use upper- and lower-case. Such can be the effect of too-frequent hectoring by detailed layouts. The compositor knows not only that he will lose time if he starts 'using his head', but also that he might be letting the House in for costly non-chargeable corrections if he guesses wrong. If the fellow wrote it in upper- and lower-case, how are we to know that he wanted capitals? Better play safe. And so the vicious circle goes into full swing, as the once-diffident customer finds himself expected to lay down the law on style by more and more explicit layouts — which make the craftsmen more and more dependent on such help.

Now we know, and the schools know, what will happen to the Trade if print-buyers *in general* begin to think of 'the printer' *by and large* as no more than a manufacturer. It is happening in America now: the printer, there, is primarily one who prints . . . whether he still sets the formes from his own type or simply puts on his machines what the customer sends him ready-made in the way of plates of matter set by a compositor house. We also know that in Switzerland the Trade has taken stern measures against such possibilities: e.g. no specialist composing-houses; *compulsory* examinations for all apprentices; and a general consciousness of what the word 'printer' ought to mean to the print-buyer. The Trade in Britain will have to go one way or the other. There is still time to debate the matter. So far, no suggestion has been offered here that applies to the Trade as a whole. But the growing use of the 'insultingly

precise' layout does affect the Trade as a whole; and never more so than when the 'type-conscious' print-buyer begins counting on his fingers those firms to which he would be willing to send a manuscript or a piece of typewritten copy without a very explicit and detailed layout. For that only means that before he labels the whole basketful 'printers — not to be trusted in design' he is willing to pick it over for a handful that he can transfer to another basket labelled 'typographic studios, with or without their own manufacturing facilities'. The same thing happens when a few firms distinguish themselves as 'creative printers'. They find themselves in a third basket: 'advertising and promotion specialists (with or without their own factories, with or without agency discounts)'. In either case the picking-over is an ominous sign.

It will energize the debate if we think of the foolproof layout as a half-way house. It represents the point at which the buyer is still trusting his printer to set up the type (so long as he does precisely what he is told). Should even that trust falter, the ready-made stereo or plate would loom up as the logical ter-minus: to which national Press advertisements have already arrived.[1]

The print-buyers all seem to be aware that the drawing-up of minutely-detailed layouts not only stultifies the compositor but wastes their own time. They seem rather anxious to make it clear that they have not been messing about with pencil and

1 The newspapers long ago decided that all advertisers were madmen who would ask for the moon if they had the slightest encouragement. The typical 'house-set' displayed advertisement shows how much encouragement local tradesmen are getting when they try to compete with the chain stores" clever stereos.

pica gauge out of mere inability to resist the fascination of such work. They protest that every apparently officious pencil stroke is in fact a grim precaution based on grim past experience. If the three-line initial was designated as just that size of just that titling series, it was because the proof would otherwise show a capital of a 36-pt. upper- and lower-case fount complete with the beard which prevents it from fitting snugly into its rectangle. If the two displayed lines were very carefully marked up, it was done *lest* the shorter one be arbitrarily 'bumped-out' to square with the longer one. The niggling strokes for letter-spacing were in *because* the printer wouldn't understand what 'visual' or 'optical' spacing meant. The border was carefully indicated *for ear that* the printer, left to himself, would set ribbonwise around the area one single unit of a Caslon flower intended as a set of four; or some one fancy rule. And if the buyer felt that he had to say in so many words 'No full points at the end of crossheads or title lines', he would not have taken that precaution if he had not felt sure that no such ungrammatical and redundant little dots would appear in the proof.

That is the sort of thing they say — the print-buyers and their agents, the professional print-handlers — in self-defence when *they are reproached* for insulting the intelligence of skilled crafts-men by 'meticulous' layouts.[1] Unfortunately printers never do reproach their customers, never put them on the defensive — and so never get a chance to learn what they are really afraid of. What it comes down to is this, that the print-buyer believes (rightly or wrongly) that the 'average printer' has not yet revised his house style in the light of various reforms which

1 For once that adjective can be used in its accurate sense. 'Meticulous' derives from the Latin *metus*, fear.

are now accepted as good style by the typographic designers.

Where that is true, it is understandable enough. When you begin laying down the law to the composing-room, stroke by stroke, you are not putting its craftsmen in any mood to notice the difference between you, who have reasoned out your objections to meaningless full points, etc, and some novelty fidgeter who likes change for its own sake. The printer has heard too much cheap time-serving talk about what is 'modern' and 'old-fashioned', too little about what is logical and illogical, clear and cluttered, good on principle or bad on principle. But it means that the schools will henceforth have to pay more attention to the problems of house style. Problem No. 1, I gather, is the foreman's attitude. It is not enough to teach apprentices the *nuances* of good spacing, etc, and then let them be snubbed with 'We don't do it that way here, lad' (in other words, 'Who are you to question the validity of our house style?'). I know of two schools that are now considering the idea of bringing out a memorandum on good and bad style, itemizing the twelve or so 'grim precautions' which no print-buyer ought to feel it necessary to take. If such a pamphlet, printed as a student project, could be circulated by the schools to every printing office that they serve (and labelled as a suggestion open to discussion), the effect would be far greater than that of trusting semi-articulate youngsters to explain to affronted foremen 'how we do it in school'.

The schools have been all too successful in training young compositors to 'think' — as designers. Too many of these young men have thought their way out of the Trade into much better-paid jobs with no 'hod-carrying' duties. The typical compositor is not, never has been, never will be a designer, i.e.

one who constantly asks 'Why?' and 'Why not?'. He has the opposite genius. He is the one man who has always been expected to know the correct, accepted style and follow it. His respect for the style of the house must no longer be misrepresented by print-buyers as obduracy. He is supposed to have convictions on style. It is better for him to cling to redundant full points and Engraver's Gothic than to stop clinging to anything except the designer-customer's coat-tail. But the schools still have time to rescue him from those sorry alternatives. They can first of all help to bring about a general reform of house style, and so break the 'vicious circle' by abolishing the need (where it now exists) for the insultingly detailed layout. Then they will see more immediate results from their admirable policy of training compositors to 'use their heads', whether as designers or as perceptive interpreters of other men's ideas. Such training presupposes opportunities to exercise it.

THE PRIDE OF CRAFTSMANSHIP

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NOTE: *It is the custom of British printing schools to hold annual prizegivings at which proud employers and relatives applaud a succession of blushing youths as they come forward on the platform to receive their certificates and special prizes. Traditionally, the prizes must be tools which the young man will carry with him in his career When they are actual manual tools — the composing stick that the journeyman compositor will carry with him wherever he goes, or the pica gauge of the layout man — they are symbols of the independence of the craftsman who owns his own means of livelihood. The machine-minders (pressmen) and others whose business it will be to operate other men's tools and equipment must be content with inscribed textbooks as symbols of that which they do carry about with them — their special skill and know-how. The speaker on such occasions can hardly help wanting to make some sort of presentation to them: and the best he can hope to give is some one phrase or mental image that may stick in the young people's memory. It is a time for lifting the nose off the grindstone and asking the sort of questions which only those people can afford to ask who are genuinely wealthy in terms of the most formidable kind of capital, namely, years in the Bank of Time, not yet spent.*

Of many of these occasions, the one I most vividly remember is that held by the School of Printing at the Coventry School of Art in 1952. Eleven years before it had been reduced to a heap of rubble from which all that could be salvaged was one Arab press and a handful of type.

Now, the architect's plans were being displayed for a magnificent printing-school building. An exhibition of student work round the walls showed the spectacular recovery the school had made in the interval with the help of an enthusiastic local printing trade and a staff that recognized the importance of design as well as of technical proficiency in the training of young printers.

The large and jubilant audience gathered in the recreation room of one of the largest of the local printing offices whose managing director, Mrs F. Hatton, is one of the few women executives of the trade. The students, prizewinners, and the rest occupied the place of honour in the front row. Having clasped each young hand into which I was allowed to put a prize or certificate, I threw away a prepared paper and improvised for them the remarks that follow:

E VERY SPEAKER at a prizegiving wants to 'give' something which will be 'prized' by those who hear it — if it is only one memorable image or maxim. My gift to you shall be a reminder of the Little Soldier, in Hans Christian Andersen's story, who entered the room that was full of copper coins and loaded his knapsack, pockets, and boots with the treasure and then went on into the next room and found it stacked with *silver* coins. He did then what you students have been doing in effect. Your hours of time are coins of different value, according to how you 'spend' them. You gave up the copper-coin hours that you might have spent on immediate pleasures — the pictures, the ice-drome, and the rest — and instead you repacked your knapsack with coins of much higher purchasing power. Tonight you're well loaded with the silver coins of Trained Skill that mean security and a better job and more money in the years to come. Ahead of you now lies the third room, where the coins

are of pure gold. Some people never get that far, for to get there you must in turn get rid of the idea that Success is to be measured only in terms of making more money, and you must come to realize that what you really want to buy with your waking hours for the rest of your life is — Enjoyment. I don't mean mere enjoyment of *leisure*; a man who staggers away from a maddeningly boring job (or one that he has never quite mastered) and drugs himself with a few hours at some gaudy fun-fair is 'enjoying', at the best, only the little tattered margins of his lifetime. I mean the sort of enjoyment that a man takes in his day's work when he can honestly say that he couldn't be bribed to change it for another sort of job: when his skill and knowledge are such as to enable him to look upon any specific task that comes along as either enjoyably easy (because he knows just how to tackle it) or enjoyably difficult, in that it challenges that part of his mind that tends to go stale if it is never confronted with a tricky problem or given a chance to survive a crisis.

You can tell precisely when you are ready to throw out the silver coins to make room for the gold. It is that point at which you are dead sure that any new job which merely offers an increase of income, at the cost of working against the grain of your own temperament and losing all sense of relish in the day's work, would be a bad investment of your precious, irrecoverable years.

A close substitute for the word 'temperament' is 'set of talents'. Remember that 'talent', in its present-day sense, is a metaphor. It originally meant a coin, and it still refers us to that parable in which the stupid man expected to be praised for merely not having lost the coin with which he had been trusted, while the brighter servants were explaining how they invested their coins and what a good return they got for the money. So it is not

only time that we invest, to get the golden return of enjoyment-of-work. 'Getting ahead', in printing as elsewhere, means different things to different types and temperaments, and it is fatal to try to apply one yardstick of success to all.

First, there is the type which can be called the natural-born 'master man'. No matter how he's employed today, by the age of forty he'll own his own printing business: not at all because he'll make more money that way than he might, with the same abilities, as a high-salaried manager; but because he has the business man's vocation for taking risks — 'gambling', in the highest and best sense. We are all gamblers in some degree, but most of us are content to work off that instinct on the Penny Pools or at the bridge table. The business man plays for much higher stakes. He takes every penny of his own savings — aye, and his wife's and his friends' if he can — and stakes them on what the rest of the world considers a Dark Horse — his ability to organize a business so as to clear a profit. What he hopes is that there will be something left in the till after he has filled all the week's wage-envelopes, paid all the salaries and rates and taxes and public-service charges, replenished his stocks, and so on and so forth. When there's still a bit left over, he grudgingly allows himself and his family their living expenses and eagerly counts the rest as money to be reinvested: new and better plant, a better design-service — at any rate a better service, to attract more customers and a better type of customer, so that there will be a little more left in the till next time — and so on. It is characteristic of the master-man type that he will always compel *one* person in his firm, namely himself, to work an eighteen-hour day whenever it seems necessary.

Then there is the managerial type. What he wants is an

exciting, responsible, complex, and taxing job — with the sort of salary that such a job commands. The operative word is 'salary'. He does ask for a stated sum of money at regular intervals, instead of whatever's-left-in-the-till. 'Getting ahead' means to him getting a still more exciting, complex, etc, job at a commensurately larger salary. His thrill as a gambler does not come punctually every Friday, when so many wage-envelopes have to be filled whether or not the customers have paid up, but perhaps at five- or ten-year intervals, when he considers changing from a secure job of which he knows all the ins and outs, to one that is much better paid, and just possibly more than he can competently handle.

Distinct from both these white-collar types is the skilled artisan; not the man who uses his own skill as a ladder by which he can climb into a white-collar job, but the man who thinks of and exercises manual or mechanical skill as a lifetime career.

You may say that such a man is more interested in 'keeping in line' with his fellow-workers than in 'getting ahead' of them. Certainly it would be inconceivable for any journeyman to offer what he has to sell to the boss (his time and trained skill) as competitively as the boss offers what *he* has to sell to the customer. When a master printer says 'Because I have better plant and facilities than my competitors, I can promise you a much better job at a price no higher than theirs', everybody — even his competitors — will agree that that's a fair offer. Now try to imagine a compositor saying to the boss: 'Because I have a natural talent, highly trained, I can easily set many more error-free ens in an hour than you'll ever get from Joe or Bill for the same hourly rate.' In other words, 'Employ me, instead of some less-talented man who is *competing* with me for the

same job at the same wage!' No, he doesn't 'compete' in such terms. He would never 'cut the price' (of his labour) for the reason that some master printers give for having cut their prices — because they badly wanted the job.

All that I grant you; we'll agree that the man who was born to be a skilled artisan or craftsman would be revolted at the idea of getting *ahead of* his fellow-workers by pushing them back as he scrambles to the front. But please remember *why* he despises the scramblers. It is because he belongs to the only strict and really exclusive aristocracy that remains in our democratic world: the aristocracy of Skill. He knows (without any reference to his employer) precisely where he ranks in that hierarchy of the fully-trained. 'Getting ahead' means to him what it has always meant to aristocrats: just assuming and entering upon what they feel to be their own innate rights. Here we are talking first of all about Nature, and Nature has never developed a democracy. She arbitrarily implants in certain people at birth, by inheritance or by her own sweet will, the power to achieve (by practice and good training) an enormously greater degree of skill than other people could attain with the same practice and training. It's like a child being born to a dukedom: he still has to learn the behaviour and duties of a duke, and bad upbringing may make him a bad duke, but at least he has started off with certain privileges and obligations which the rest of us don't have.

In some trades, the skilled artisan has this further and unhappy resemblance to a duke, that he is being treated as a picturesque and obsolete survival from a past age. Ask the plasterers and stonemasons what's happening in this age of pressboard and concrete. The printers are luckier: but even they

find themselves in a world which is deeply impressed by any sort of machinery or 'system', and not so appreciative of human skill. So a natural-born craftsman may find himself in some office which is a veritable dungeon if not torture-chamber to his type of mind. I mean a shop where overcrowding, bad conditions, and feeble management combine to create constant nervous tension: where the workman never sees the finished job; where pride-in-skill is broken by the terrible conviction that not one single customer of that shop will ever know enough about the purpose and nature of print to criticize or even notice bad craftsmanship when he sees it. I know this much about true craftsmen, that they would infinitely rather work for a notorious fault-finder who knows what he's talking about, than for some dull-eyed wretch whose customers — I can't put it too strongly — will actually *want* inferior workmanship, or at least gladly put up with it, on the ground that it must have taken fewer possible hours to do, and must therefore be cheaper, than a decent-looking job.

In such a situation, 'getting ahead' means getting away and into a better job. If the punishment has gone on too long, the craftsman may have become convinced in his heart that there just aren't any printing houses where skill is duly valued and given its fair chance. In that case he will cease to think about a better job and think simply of a better-paid job. His argument is: 'Since I'm sure to be doing boring jobs for unworthy folk who ask for nothing better than good-enough, let me at least sell in the best market those skills which they do appreciate, notably manual speed and a knack with machinery.' And once he has taken that line he has probably lost his way for ever to the Golden Room of enjoyment-of-work. He will get his extra

shillings, and we can only hope that they buy him a little sur-
cease at the end of the day — in a picture-palace or a hobby
club or wherever the tattered margins of the day can afford
room for anything worth remembering at the end of one's life.

Have you noticed that it's only young people who can talk
about death as easily and naturally as they talk about life? Later
on it gets too real to be comfortable: but at twenty-one you can
still afford to think of your own deathbed as an intensely inter-
esting place, a kind of grandstand from which you will be re-
viewing the procession of your years and asking yourself what
you *bought* with the time that you 'spent' across life's counter.
I beg you to try that exercise of imagination, now, before it
puts any cold chill down your spine. Will you be able to say
that you got a good bargain from life? That you kept on
investing time and study and getting a good return for every
hour-coin? If you are the natural-born executive type, did you
win your way to that desk and telephone, or were you side-
tracked into a 'safe' wage-enveloped job? If you were born to
enjoy doing things very skilfully instead of telling other people
to do things, did you have the sense to seek out (or stick to) the
employer who valued and rewarded skill, or were you side-
tracked by the offer of a little more money from a shop that
had no perceptible standards of craftsmanship? In that last
grandstand, that's the kind of question you are going to ask
yourself. You will have spent some forty or fifty years in the
world's great bazaar, and you will see then what you bought
with all those coins you were given: the copper ones that
bought cheap spare-time pleasures, the silver ones that bought
material security, the golden ones with which you purchased
active delight in your job, and enduring pride in it.

TRAINING IN TASTE

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M UCH HAS BEEN SAID and written in recent years about the
need to educate the general public of Britain to higher standards
of taste in industrial design — that is to say, in effect, the look
of the goods that we buy and keep around us as part of our
daily lives, from the shoes on our feet to the wallpaper on our
walls and books on our shelves. What makes the need urgent
and real — even in the eyes of those who have no interest in
aesthetics — is the fact that human nature, at home and abroad,
is quite as much affected during the process of shopping by the
outward appearance of the goods as by the assurance of their
solidity and long wear; and that, however this point in human
nature may be ignored at home, it must be taken seriously
where the foreigner is concerned as long as he represents the
vital export market. So long as a great and growing part of
world trade can be captured with the help of witty and in-
genious design, so long must the whole subject of design be
taken seriously in every nook and corner of the British educa-
tional system. It is not enough that technical colleges and
schools of arts and crafts should spend three times as much
energy and money on source material, 'visual aids' and other
means of stimulating young minds to original, confident think-
ing about design. So long as man is a social animal, the creative
instinct of the talented designer will be spurred on or held back,
drawn into fruitful collaborations or scattered into cultural

desert-islands according to the general attitude of the public at large.

It follows that training in taste, and lessons on the logic and rationale of design must be part of the education of the citizen at large as well as of vocational training. While every industry or trade is training its own youth to a consciousness of design by showing and discussing actual examples, ancient and modern, predominantly of that particular sort of object, there are nevertheless certain physical things which by their nature deserve to be examined and understood — as problems in design — by everyone interested in the fundamental principles. Buildings and printed things — books, periodicals and ephemeral printing — are things with which the general public is daily and intimately concerned. Hence the visual aids for the study of architecture and typography seem particularly advisable at this time when so much has to be done quickly, and everyone wants to know where to make a start. In the field of typography Mr J. Carruthers has made a most practical and timely start with what I believe is the first filmstrip illustrating the history of typefaces — this most subtle and self-effacing exercise in 'industrial design' whose variations of style are so closely related to their function of conveying thought, and are therefore remarkably illuminative of the cultural efforts through which they arose. We are now in a period of eclecticism where the roman and italic of normal print is concerned; to the printer and his compositor, and to the student typographic designer that makes it ten times more important to study the history of typefaces for guidance as to their correct use (paper surface, decoration, etc). Having visited more than forty schools and colleges in Great Britain where typographic design

is taught, I could testify to the instructor's need for illustrative material. While there is no absolute substitute for an early printed book (since the feel of the pure rag hand-made paper is part of the experience), it is equally true to say that not more than three people at a time can get close enough to an actual printed book to follow — under ideal circumstances — what the instructor is saying about its typeface; and what he says might easily take fifteen or twenty minutes. The series of pictures which are presented in this filmstrip are capable of providing the pictorial background and reference point for not only the explanatory remarks suggested by Mr Carruthers and others with which the teacher may want to expand the lesson, but also for questions and discussions for the class. I write confidently on this matter because I happened to be present at a conference of printing teachers when an advance copy of this strip was first shown.

But the obvious value of visual aids for vocational training will not, I hope, obscure the fact that this very same filmstrip and commentary could be used as what might be called an episode or section of one of those general courses in the appreciations of the arts and of design which are now beginning to be received as of high importance in the training of good citizens. Type design is something for which the British have been distinguishing themselves, and frequently leading all the rest of the world, ever since John Baskerville began his experiments in Birmingham almost exactly two centuries ago. Ugly and handsome typefaces, efficient and distracting typefaces, fine faces ruined by misuse and bad faces ruining costly paper, are to be found literally at any hour of the day in every city or village in this country. The excellent mental training of

distinguishing the sheep from the goats and being able to say why, is freely available to all—once its secrets have been unlaid by a little preliminary history, theory, and terminology. Mr Carruther's pioneer contribution in the sphere of visual aids is therefore a matter for congratulation, to many more than those whose immediate and present needs it so well fulfils.

TRADITION AND PROGRESS

TRADITION AND PROGRESS IN PRINTING

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THERE ARE STILL SOME readers who cannot even begin to explain how printed words and pictures manage to place themselves on book pages that must once have been plain white paper. And there are still some expert printers, binders, and blockmakers — in the pejorative sense of 'expert' — whose minds are so full of the detailed answers to that 'How' that they have little room left for curiosity as to 'Why' or whether the words were worth printing in the first place, or the pictures deserving of all the trouble that went to their reproduction. But both sorts of ignorance are unfashionable today. *The Penrose Annual* is no longer addressed, as the earliest volumes were, almost exclusively to the technician requiring a guide through the forest of new inventions and processes of the graphic arts. Today the layman who thumbs through its handsome quarto pages and its scores of illustrative plates may well ask himself whether there can be any other industry or cluster of trades in the modern world which demands from its more progressive members (employer and artisan too) anything like the same catholicity of interest. What sort of trade is this, in which a composite account of the year's progress can linger over the problems of typography, modern book-jacket design and other aesthetic battlefields before going on to the latest reports of Photon, Rotofoto and other evil-sounding technical innovations which are quite possibly of tremendous import to the printer?

The specialist book-printing offices (of which there are fewer than a hundred in the whole of Great Britain) are in a relatively sheltered position, where neither stylistic wars nor technological earthquakes can do them any immediate damage. The typographic style of the British printed book was scarcely touched by the cold, bony finger of the Bauhaus which put so many dismal sans-serifs on so many Continental title-pages. When the book printer hears rumours of fundamentally new processes of colour reproduction he does not have to think of them in terms of a fateful gamble on entirely new plant, because he is not forced to print his own colour plates. As for the new inventions that are threatening to change the very language of letterpress typography (e.g. by substituting the notion of 'onset' or electronic transference of ink to paper for the notion of 'printing' by direct impression), those ones which are fit to survive will first have to conquer the newspaper and periodical fields, and then be improved and adapted to the needs of the general commercial printer, before they can cause any havoc among the book printers. The bicentenary of the death of William Ged is a reminder that even stereotyping, one of the most valuable and radical inventions in the history of printing, could lie dormant, an apparent failure, for more than fifty years because the inventor had been unable to conciliate the printing trade.

For more than a century it has been physically possible to produce a book at the price and speed of a daily newspaper, by the quite simple (and wholly unacceptable) device of setting it in the format of a newspaper — small type, narrow columns and all: a pennyworth indeed, but not at all what the book reader would agree to call a book. During the late war huge numbers of cheap books were produced for members of the

United States forces — pocket-size books set in double-column across oblong pages because that format made it easier to work them off on gigantic news machines. As an expedient it was tolerated: as an experiment it failed to have any influence on book design. In England, on the other hand, it has several times been proved that it is the buyers of cheap paper-backs who most generously reward the publisher who takes their typography seriously, and most cruelly punish those who approach the design of cheap books as if they were stumbling down the back stairs into a Victorian scullery. The new inventions would offer a more immediate threat to the peace of mind of the cheap-book printer if they promised any tempting new opportunities to the designer, or better values to the producer. But there is nothing very stirring in the prospect of a really washable binding, even when it is guaranteed not to feel or smell or look like a washable binding; and very few book designers look forward to the sort of revival of the art of calligraphy which would be stimulated by the abolition of metal printing type and its replacement by 'foto' composition. The problem might be simpler if the paper-backs really were the cheapest printed books available to the public, but of course that is not so. The cheapest books, to the reader, are those which he can use and enjoy for nothing at the public library; and as long as book-lending is thought of as a local government service there will be reason enough to case books sturdily in boards, to print them on something stouter than newsprint and, for that matter, to design them so that they may behave well in that split second during which the subconscious mind of the potential reader registers its almost instantaneous decision as to whether the printed page looks readable or not.

Nevertheless the price of books, like 'the supply of game for London' in the *Gloria Scott* case, 'is going steadily up', mainly as the result of rising labour costs which affect the whole printing industry. If popular illustrated weeklies find reason enough to scrap most of their existing plant in favour of the new techniques they will do so, and though the revolution would not necessarily spread to the book-printing houses it would none the less cause as much of a sensation as mechanical composition was causing at the end of the nineteenth century. And in that time of upheaval it would become more important than ever before that the book-reading public should have, and even be able to voice, clear and worthy ideas of what constitutes 'good value' in a printed book.

That is when Britain's National Book League, and the American Institute of Graphic Art, and all the other national bodies that have taken the trouble to organize annual selections of 'fifty books' would see the value of what they have done. That is when the British Federation of Master Printers would reap the reward of its new educational propaganda to the public. Britain's friendliest and most distinguished export, printed books, must continue to look like something designed with pride for a properly exigent public, no matter what technological thunder is in the air. They will maintain their standards by public consent, as long as the educated citizen has a fair chance to pick up in school or in exhibition halls or in the course of reading some elementary knowledge of the problems and pleasures of book design — as much, say, as he is supposed to have of architecture. If he learns little more than the meaning of a few technical terms, even that enables him to report his likes and dislikes without verbal floundering.

It has taken less than sixty years for the excitement over the hand-printed Book Beautiful, in its costly limited edition, to spread and democratize all the way down to the Penguin Classics and the New Penguin Shakespeare, which only need a parchment binding to put them on the same shelf with the Aldine and Elzevir pocket editions and other immortal eighteen-pennyworths. What started as a cult of 'fine printing', with the designers putting very special emphasis on the honest loveliness of velvet-black type prints impressed into dampened hand-made paper, turned during the inter-war years into a general movement to raise the standards of book design — with most of the applause now reserved for what the designer could do (layout, choice of type and so on) and not enough appreciation of those beauties of inking, presswork, intelligent line-spacing which the publisher cannot secure by taking thought or writing down specifications but only by sending the work to the kind of book office that does work of that quality. Since 1940, the greatest of those offices have been shaken in turn by enemy action, by paper and labour shortages, and by the pressure of books queuing for their chance to get or return to print.

That same pressure, and the emergence of some new publishers with not many qualifications beyond the possession of a stock of paper, have sent a number of manuscripts to general and periodical printing offices, and the resulting books have served to reveal one of the faults in printing-trade education. For, in spite of distinguished efforts in Southampton Row and elsewhere, it is even today true to say that the apprentice in the printing trade who is not attached to a specialist book house is unlikely to receive any proper training in the elements of good book style. Recently two authorities gave their unofficial but

weighty opinions on the kind of faults — dishonesty, pretentiousness, and the rest — that ought to bar a publication from wasting the time of the judges of the annual 'Fifty Books'. There is reason to think that unworthy ink, paper, and machining will be the three that arouse most wrath, and that a country which has achieved so much in typographic design will now be paying more attention to *printing* in its literal sense of 'impression'.

This can no longer happen through the intervention of wealthy patrons or well-to-do artist-craftsmen like William Morris and St. John Hornby. The patron today is the taxpayer in his millions, and it is mainly in the schools that his taste is formed. Fortunately printing and typography, even more than architecture, help the teacher to explain the basic moralities of industrial design in terms of things which come within the student's everyday experience. The unique position of the printer, and the extraordinary advantages which he holds over the members of other industries can best be appreciated by remembering what normally happens when the machine invades a skilled craft.

Its first and worst effect is to drive a splitting-wedge into the crack of division, scarcely perceptible in many handicrafts, between 'design' (deciding how the thing shall look) and 'production', or carrying-through the decision. When mechanization falls upon them, the men of skill and their apprentices leap for their lives to the production side of the great cleft and are never again seen or heard of by the public at large, save as unidentified workers or technicians: never, at any rate, in their former characters as consultant craftsmen. The need to explore, first the ways of machinery and later the special mentality of

mechanics, leads the man of skill ever farther away from his traditional point of rendezvous with the public — the market stall, counter or work-bench at which the foxy master-craftsman and his knowledgeable, greedy customer could size each other up, finger stuffs or make sketches, decide what the job would be worth (to each side), and so bicker their way towards a pretty clear understanding of how the thing ought to look.

In most industries mechanization has destroyed such meeting-places and has even uprooted the memory of them from the minds of the artisans on the one side and the consumers on the other. In the old forge or cobbler's shop the poorest wretch of an apprentice might learn, by eavesdropping, how a master of craft extracts from an inarticulate customer all the ten or twenty answers which decide the quality and shape and function of the thing to be made. But in the modern factory the very last thing which a highly paid scientific manager learns is how to 'manage' the customer. The literally crafty business of coaxing the tongue-tied to say what they really want (or are willing to spend), the art of helping the short-sighted to picture a better-looking job, and the work of coaxing the dullard into desiring it, are as necessary as ever. But they are now normally carried on far beyond the production man's horizon by a chain of specialists — market researchers, industrial designers, publicity experts; and when he is summoned from the factory to confer with them on a matter of design he is apt to waste their time by protesting that he knows nothing about 'the artistic angle', in the pathetic hope that his inquisitors will in turn courteously disclaim any knowledge of or interest in machinery. But they never do have that decency. The industrial designer trots along the assembly lines and into the store-rooms as confidently as if

he were really on his own ground. When the new model or design comes up for approval the salesmen and even the directors may applaud its novelty or 'courage', but the technician is silent. Ever since his work-bench turned into a factory it has been his innocent boast that the goods look 'just the same' (in the sense of 'not much worse') after successive economies in technique and materials. Now he stands back, keeping mum-chance, while some young person from the Council of Industrial Design explains how different the product will look when it has been 'streamlined'.

From that picture of humiliation let the student turn to the oldest and least ordinary of all mass-production factories — the printer's. Mechanization brought its shocks and distractions to the printer as to anyone else, and created the new profession of typographic designer: but what it could not do, in the nature of the work, was to supersede the ritual bickering between the customer and the craftsman.

Printing is still commissioned: which means that maker and buyer still have to reach their respective notions of what the job will be worth to them, before the making can start; and that in turn means that the decision on design, or how-it-shall-look, cannot at any rate be jumped at by mere guesswork about the feelings of an anonymous 'market'. Printed books are things commissioned, usually by very knowledgeable publisher-designers from responsible master printers and binders. The conversations and trial-pages which precede the weeks of actual production keep alive a spirit of mutual respect and collaboration which is more than five hundred years old.

ON THE CHOICE OF TYPEFACES

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THE LEGIBILITY of a typeface has an exact parallel in the audibility of a human voice. A lecturer must make every word audible and distinct; yet within the limits of audibility lie the whole range of speaking tones from a metallic monotonous drawl to the infinitely flexible and persuasive tones of the good speaker.

Type, the voice of the printed page, can be legible and dull, or legible and fascinating, according to its design and treatment. In other words, what the book-lover calls readability is not a synonym for what the optician calls legibility.

In choosing a type design for book printing the problem of ocular legibility has in most cases been solved in advance; that is, it is very unlikely that a typefounder or composing-machine manufacturer would produce and offer to good printers a face of which any two characters had a confusing similarity, or in which any one letter ignored the 'code' which governs its design in roman or italic. The size must be chosen in view of whether the work is one of reference, that is, to be read in short sections by people who are concentrating, or a novel to be read uninterruptedly by people who are enjoying themselves, or an educational book for young and reluctant eyes. Here again the makers are not likely to cut a small size so small as to be 'illegible'; though any size may be called 'unreadable' when it is too small or even too large for a given purpose — a reader's, not an oculist's purpose.

The moment the question shifts to *readability*, however, these elementary precautions give way to endless and delightfully varied experiments no less effective in each minute difference than is a change of timbre in the speaking voice. Set a page in Fournier against another in Caslon and another in Plantin, and it is as if you heard three different people delivering the same discourse — each with impeccable pronunciation and clarity, yet each through the medium of a different personality. Perhaps the layman would not be able to tell one old-style setting from two others of the same group; yet he could not read the three pages in turn without at least a subconscious discrimination. The smallest variation in serif-construction is enormous compared to the extent to which a disc of metal, in a telephone receiver, vibrates to electric shocks produced by one voice and another; yet we find it easy to deduce from one such set of vibrations that an old friend is asking us to 'guess who this is'!

PHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The beginner in book typography is prone to import aesthetic sentimentality into what is first of all a matter of convenience. Baskerville and Fournier were both designed during the eighteenth century, and some people think that they represent in miniature, and in terms of their respective national cultures, the clarity and good manners of that age. But should you label an old or modern author '*dix-huitième*' and start matching his words to what you consider a type of the era, it would be better first to remember that Baskerville, being relatively generous in set-width, will 'drive out' the book; whilst Fournier, a neatly condensed face, will be more frugal of space. Thus *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, produced by Peter Davies Ltd, had a

large amount of text to begin with, and not too many pages were to separate one illustration from the next: Fournier, in a beautifully legible small size, solved the problem. Baskerville, conversely, printed on bulky paper, has saved many a fine book from seeming to offer less than the money's worth. The typographer, whether he be connected with the printing or publishing office, should be able at a few minutes' notice to calculate ('cast off') how many pages the copy will come to in a given face, taking into account the point size, set-width, number of lines and leading between the lines.

The word 'set' which appears in our type specimen books means that an actual type of the widest letter in the fount (such as cap. M) will be as many points wide as the number given, and that the narrower letters will be proportionate to that width, if the type is cast on that indicated 'set'. Thus a fount like Baskerville, of which the 12-pt. is '12 set', is going to occupy more space, word for word, than Bodoni 135, 12-pt. which is $11\frac{3}{4}$ set; Centaur and Garamond 12-pt., which are $11\frac{1}{4}$ set, will take less space; and Fournier, which in 12-pt. is $10\frac{1}{4}$ set, will vary from the width of Baskerville by the proportion of $10\frac{1}{4}$ set to 12 set.

Some typefaces are more successful in the sizes above 11-pt. than in those below it. The fine cut of Bodoni demands in justice exquisite printing for the 6- and 8-pt.; Caslon and Garamond seem to many to improve as the sizes increase. Aldine Bembo 270, used on these pages, is one of the new Old Faces that preserves all its freshness and charm in the smallest sizes. Fournier and Monotype Plantin, for different reasons, are highly successful in the smallest settings as well as in and over the normal sizes. Centaur is a fine type in any size, but certain

subtleties of cutting cannot be appreciated below 24-pt., and these details go to make it as successful an upper- and lower-case for poster work as has ever been designed.

If the quality of paper is known in advance — as it must be in most cases, and especially where illustrations are used — this will influence the choice of a typeface. Old Face was not designed for calendered paper, which did not exist until Baskerville's experiments; the difficulty arises in the fact that a smooth-finished surface of paper takes the inked copy with such ease that little or no impression *into* the fabric of the paper is necessary, and, therefore, the only ink which comes off the type is that on the actual printing surface. In general, calendered or shiny surface ('art') paper needs such a face as Monotype Plantin, which is not noticeably thinned down by such treatment.

In the old days a printer had no reason such as these for stocking different typefaces. He worked on one kind of paper: hand-made pure rag, with the corrugated surface left by the wires of the paper-mould — a surface now known as antique laid. He had only one process by which pictures and type could be printed simultaneously. Nowadays he also has to be the master of a process as different from the old type-printing as the 'kiss' impression of thousands of shallow dots of metal on smooth paper is different from the pressure of a deep-cut type and wood-blocks into damped paper. The modern printer is versatile, as his ancestors never dreamed of being; he prints from a rotary as well as a flat surface, and often from rubber or copper cylinders. He has long recognized the necessity of using a special kind of paper for each process. Nowadays, if only to prevent set-off, he has learned to stock special inks for special

papers. But some survival of craft tradition prevents many printers from realizing that a face, like an ink or a paper, can be suitable or unsuitable for a given process. There is still a widespread feeling amongst them that the typographers ought to settle on one perfect type, and thus eliminate the expense of stocking, not that one fount of 12-pt. which the old printer would call simply 'our pica', but at least three or four different sets of 12-pt. composition matrices — chosen, be it noted, not for aesthetic reasons, as all can be 'good' designs, but for as practical reasons as hold good in the paper-stores. Quite apart from the survival of the 'one face' tradition, there is the fact that a composition series costs money. It is therefore necessary for laymen, buyers of printing, to discipline their enthusiasm for new faces.

If a Monotype user has four body composition faces, and each is well-designed and adapted to a particular printing process, and if the four designs are sufficiently different to convey four different 'tones of voice' it would be inordinate to expect that man to increase his type repertory without very good reason. A customer can confer a great benefit upon a hitherto undistinguished printing office by clamouring for one fine composition face where there was none before; but on the other hand to wave aside Bembo and insist on Centaur or *vice versa*, is an ungrateful act. Besides, if there is a really defensible necessity for Bembo in that particular job, why not reward the master printer who, independently and of his own judgement, invested in that type without being prompted? In short, the man who wants a choice of good typefaces must go where they are or else accept what he is offered — unless he is willing, in token of his sincerity, to go shares with his printer and help purchase that fount.

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24-PT. BASKERVILLE ITALIC

Type, the voice of the printed page, can be legible

24-PT. BEMBO ITALIC

Type, the voice of the printed page, can be legible

24-PT. BODONI ITALIC

Type, the voice of the printed page, can be legible

24-PT. CASLON ITALIC

Type, the voice of the printed page, can be legible

24-PT. GARAMOND ITALIC

Type, the voice of the printed page, can be legible

24-PT. GARAMOND BOLD ITALIC

Type, the voice of the prin- ted page, can be legible

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Type, the voice of the printed page, can be legible

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Let us leave this matter with the admonition that most old faces look anaemic on coated paper, that a few types like Plantin Light 113, Ehrhardt, Bembo, Imprint and Bell, are adaptable to varying processes, and that no printer ought to put in a composition face except that a *number* of customers over a *number* of years may be advantageously served by it.

One other mechanical point in the choice of typefaces has to do with combinations of different alphabets. Nowadays italic is thought of as a part of the whole fount loosely called 'roman', but the appearance in a page, or even a long sentence, in italic would show why this form of letter, at least until the middle of the sixteenth century, was considered as an entirely separate alphabet. When italic was thought of as separate cursive a certain latitude and individuality was allowed to it. Garamond italic, for all its whimsical and charming irregularity of slope which lends piquancy to certain italicized words, does not invite the effort of reading in entire poems or paragraphs as well as the disciplined Baskerville or Bell italics. The kind of cursive called Chancery, to which family Blado, Bembo, Arrighi, and Lutetia italics belong, has such beauty in its own right as to justify its use in long passages or even whole books; and as far as combination is concerned, there seems to be a closer correlation between the Chancery letter and the essential form of Roman Old Face than can otherwise be found before the eighteenth century. Another question in regard to combinations: Is an exotic fount to be used anywhere in the text? If so, neither it nor the body roman must be too discrepant in weight, serif treatment, and general appearance. Perpetua is one of the few types which may be said to have 'a greek' in the sense that most romans have 'an italic'; in general one must do

one's best to see that a warm Renaissance letter like Poliphilus is mated either with New Hellenic (for colour) or the Aldine Greek, Series No. 283, rather than with a Greek cursive of the brilliance of Didot's. Even the extent to which capitals are used has some bearing on the choice of typefaces. The almost super-stitious regard for Caslon Old Face has been such that only a typographer of our own time has dared to point out that its capitals, especially the capital M, are so heavy in contrast to the lower-case that very frequent use of them on a page creates a spotty effect.

And still we have not reached the really interesting part of choosing a typeface. All this preliminary matter has consisted of a recognition of certain physical facts — which, if the craft is to maintain its touch with the real world, must always be con-sidered first and foremost. But beyond all the questions of relative width, colour, suitability for certain processes, and optical legibility, lies the whole fascinating field in which the skilled typographer is at home. We must perforce leave him at this point. Looking at a number of books, he will improvise his own dogma as to the very delicate matter of suitability — a matter in which practically every canon of good taste and every detail of a cultural background and literary training are in-volved. We can offer only two generalizations to accompany him on his journey.

The first is that before any question of physical or literary suitability, must come the question of whether the face itself is tolerable or intolerable as a version of the roman alphabet. If a single letter is warped, emphasized above its fellows, made grotesque (as in this ugly g) or snub (as in any non-kerning f); if the letters, however pretty in themselves, do not combine

automatically into words; if the fourth consecutive page begins to dazzle and irk the eye, and in general if the pages cannot be read with subconscious but very genuine *pleasure*, that type is intolerable and that is all there is about it. It must be wiped out of the discussion. There are bad types and good types, and the whole science and art of typography begins after the first category has been set aside.

The second generalization is, briefly, that the thing is worth doing. It does genuinely matter that a designer should take trouble and take delight in his choice of typefaces. The trouble and delight are taken not merely 'for art's sake' but for the sake of something so subtly and intimately connected with all that is human that it can be described by no other phrase than 'the humanities'. If 'the tone of voice' of a typeface does not count, then nothing counts that distinguishes man from the other animals. The twinkle that softens a rebuke; the scorn that can lurk under civility; the martyr's super-logic and the child's intuition; the fact that a fragment of moss can pull back into the memory a whole forest; these are proofs that there is reality in the imponderable, and that not only notation but connotation is part of the proper study of mankind. The best part of typographic wisdom lies in this study of connotation, the suitability of form to content. People who love ideas must have a love of words, and that means, given a chance, they will take a vivid interest in the clothes which words wear. The more they like to think, the more they will be shocked by any discrepancy between a lucid idea and a murky typesetting. They will become ritualists and dialecticians. They will use such technically indefensible words as 'romantic', 'chill', 'jaunty', to describe different typefaces. If they are wise, they will always admit that

they are dealing with processes of the subconscious mind, mere deft servants of the goddess Literature. But just as the poet prefers that the wireless announcer at the reciting of his verse over the wireless should choose neither a harsh nor a maudlin tone, but a sympathetic one, so will any author cock an anxious ear before the printing type that carries his words, and ask in his pride neither for officious flattery nor harsh mistreatment, but for justice tempered with mercy.

THE TYPOGRAPHY OF THE BIBLE

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WHEN ONE SPEAKS OF 'the text of the Bible' today, one must immediately make it clear which of the two entirely different concepts is under consideration. The original, and still the general, concept is of a *body of document* bearing on a question that is, in the most literal sense, a matter of life and death. The other concept is of a collection of ancient Jewish literature and legend: as important as any great literary 'classic', and quite as deserving of attractive typography as Homer, Dante, or Shakespeare.

Obviously any printed Bible which is efficient according to one concept is bound to be inefficient according to the other. Hence only a muddle-headed critic would so confuse the two things which the word 'Bible' represents, as to attack every 'documentary' edition for not looking like a novel — or conversely, to attack any 'literary' edition for being a bad *reference book*, for not being easily portable, and for 'not looking like a [documentary style] Bible'. One could as well scold the raven for being a poor sort of dove!

The sensible critic confines himself rather to such remarks as concern the *recognized primary purpose* of any particular edition, and avoids comparisons between editions designed to fill entirely different purposes. Hence in this chapter we are dealing with the normal 'documentary' editions of recent date, and then passing on to the 'reader's' editions as if to a different subject.

PLANNING FOR PURPOSE

Something, indeed, our several examples do have in common, and that is that each of them, in its different way, is the result of special typographic planning, arising out of a renewed sense that the text deserved thoughtful and efficient embodiment. To that extent a really well-designed telephone book has something in common with a well-designed limited edition: both can be grouped as 'successful modern examples of planning-for-purpose'.

The Bible as a sacred book is, essentially, a corpus of basic documentation. To the Hebrew the sacred books are the five books of Moses, the Pentateuch, to which the other books of the Old Testament, and the other religious writings, are attached in reverence. But it is on the Pentateuch, not on the Old Testament *as* one whole document, that the Jewish witness is sworn. The Christian witness, indicating in court that he knows what the word 'sacred' means, holds in his hand one physical book containing the New Testament, with or without the Old: not two separate volumes, for he must also show that he knows what the word 'whole' means, even if he does not realize that it comes from the same root as the word 'holy'.

But the sixty-six works which he holds in his hand at that time amount, in their English translation, to about 800,000 words, that is, the amount of matter which in normal single-column book style would require five stout volumes. Since the Reformation, moreover, religious controversy has made it necessary to break up the prose into numbered 'verses', with a consequent loss of space for quadding-out short lines. The need to economize space and make a vast text appear as one physical

book, *Biblia*, had made it necessary from very early times to use double-column (a sad handicap to free verse); the need to versify the prose, and the change from succinct Latin to the much wordier vernaculars, made it necessary to keep the size of the type smaller, in proportion to the page-area, than that of any Vulgate needed to be in Gutenberg's day. Where a normal book page is allowed 300 to 400 words at most, irrespective of page size, the Bible in English, with its sixty-six title-lines and prelims, must have at least a 600-word page and even then 1,300 pages would make it very bulky for the Sunday School student, the missionary, and others. Hence double-column, for all its unfairness to poetry, is unavoidable, and newspaper-size type, e.g. 7-pt., has to be used. The only alternative (abridging the text) was ruled out from the beginning: if Scotland Yard would not throw out witnesses' accounts to lighten a bulging *dossier*, it is even more true that the Canon of Scripture, once established, could not be cut by a word — for any word constitutes 'witness', pronounced relevant to the whole Question of Life and Death.

Drastic condensation, and a 'primarily-for-reference' typographic style, are the aesthetic handicaps of the one-volume chapter-and-verse Bible. In a sense it can also be called a handicap to a designer to know that the public for any particular Bible (of this order) will bring to this book an unusual degree of will-to-read, and a too-obvious willingness to read against handicaps, provided that a good, portable, reference book is achieved at a spectacularly low price. Whoever designed the Income-Tax form must have been aware that its recipients would feel compelled to read — or take the consequences of an oversight! And the existing form shows what a handicap that

awareness can be to the designer — when all the emphasis is on space-economy.

The analogy is not perfect, for people who use Bibles for *reading* (as well as for looking up specific texts quickly, memorizing verses, etc) do not necessarily look upon that act of reading as a grim penitential exercise from which any sense of physical pleasure and ease ought to be eliminated. But they do, if they are pious, read under the best sort of compulsion — that of conscience and gratitude — and they do bring to the text so concentrated a will-to-read that the ordinary standards of 'book legibility' can be sacrificed without that fear which haunts the publisher of light fiction, when he makes a book as charming as possible to the first glance.

The remarkable thing about the 'documentary' printed Bibles is not, therefore, that they long continued to appear in aesthetically-humble costume. The wonder is rather that with all the handicaps mentioned — the need for space-economy, for cheapness, for almost fantastic extensions of the normal proof-reading precautions (which raises the value of existing stereos), and with a conservative public that asked for mere legibility rather than for any typographic amenities such as well-designed type, and willingly paid in eyestrain for the achievement of portability — there should still have occurred, in this particular field, as gallant and successful instances of 'restyling' as the whole of modern book production can provide.

LEGIBILITY — WITH DIGNITY

For each of the 'Bible houses' has independently approached the problem with more than the obvious aim of forcing the

knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God,

6 And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.

7 Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day.

8 And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.

9 For we were bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.

10 And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments,

11 Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness.

12 Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever.

13 And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this;

14 Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?

15 O LORD God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this.

CHAPTER 10

NOW when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore.

2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.

3 Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

4 Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it.

5 Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word. And they sware.

6 ¶ Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib: and when he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.

7 And they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem;

8 And that whosoever would not come within in three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.

9 ¶ Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain.

10 And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel.

11 Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.

12 Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.

13 But the people are many, and it is a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without, neither is this a work of one day or two: for we are many that have transgressed in this thing.

14 Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us.

15 ¶ Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah were employed

about this matter: and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them.

16 And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, with certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by their names, were separated, and sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter.

17 And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.

18 ¶ And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives: namely, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren; Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah.

19 And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass.

20 And of the sons of Immer; Hanani, and Zebadiah.

21 And of the sons of Harim; Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uzziah.

22 And of the sons of Pashur; Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethaneel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

23 Also of the Levites; Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah, (the same is Kelita,) Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

24 Of the singers also; Eliashib: and of the porters; Shallum, and Telem, and Uri.

25 Moreover of Israel: of the sons of Parosh; Ramiah, and Jeziah, and Malchiah, and Miamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah.

26 And of the sons of Elam; Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Eliah.

27 And of the sons of Zattu; Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza.

28 Of the sons also of Bebai; Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai.

29 And of the sons of Bani; Meshullam, Malluch, and Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal, and Ramoth.

30 And of the sons of Pahath-moab; Adna, and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezaleel, and Binnui, and Manasseh.

31 And of the sons of Harim; Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,

32 Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah.

33 Of the sons of Hashum; Mattenai, Mattathah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei.

34 Of the sons of Bani; Maadai, Amram, and Uel,

35 Benaiah, Bedeiah, Chelluh,

36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,

37 Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasau,

38 And Bani, and Binnui, Shimei,

39 And Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah,

40 Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,

41 Azareel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah,

42 Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph.

43 Of the sons of Nebo; Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jadau, and Joel, Benaiah.

44 All these had taken strange wives: and some of them had wives by whom they had children.

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

CHAPTER 1

THE words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

4 ¶ And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.

8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:

THE SECOND EPISTLE

OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

THESSALONIANS

CHAPTER 1

PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 WE are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

5 *Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

6 Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power:

12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 2

NOW we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him,

2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

9 *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

13 BUT we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

16 NOW our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

CHAPTER 3

FINALLY, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you:

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2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith.

3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep *you* from evil.

4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

6 NOW we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

10 For even when we were with you,

this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

15 Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

16 NOW the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord *be* with you all.

17 THE salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

¶ The second *epistle* to the Thessalonians was written from Athens.

Center column references:

2 unreasonable: Gr. absurd.
Ge. 3. 19; 10
1 Tn. 4. 11.
3 Deu. 7. 9.
Jn. 17. 15.
1 Th.4.11.12
5 1 Th. 3. 11.
patient...: or. *patience of Christ.*
1 Th. L. 3.
be...: or, 13 *faint not;*
Ga. 6. 9.
6 Ro. 16. 17.
1 Co. 5. 11.
1 Th. 5. 14;
ver. 11.
Ch. 2. 15.
by...: or, 14 *signify that man by an epistle.* 1 Co.
5. 11; ver. 6.
Lev. 19. 15
17. 1 Th. 5.
12; 14.
7 1 Th. 1. 5.
Ro.15.33. 16
8 1 Th. 2. 9.
1 Co. 16. 17
21.
9 1 Th. 2. 6.
Ro.16.2+.18

THE FIRST EPISTLE

OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO

TIMOTHY

CHAPTER 1

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is* our hope;

2 Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

3 AS I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do*.

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned:

6 From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;

7 Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

8 But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully;

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

12 AND I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

13 Who was before a blasphemer, and

Center column references:

1 Tit. 1. 3.
Lk. 1. 47.
Col. 1. 27.
Ro. 7. 16. 8
He. 12. 6. 9
2 Ac. 16. 1.
1 Co. 4. 17;
ver. 18.
3 ch. 6. 3.
1Co.6.9; 10
He. 13. 4.
Ex. 21. 16.
Mt. 5. 33.
2 Tim. 4. 3.
4 ch. 4. 7;
2 Tim. 4. 4;
Tit. 1. 14.
Tit. 3. 9.
2 Tim. 2. 23.
ch. 2. 7. 11
5 Ro. 13. 10.
2 Tim. 2. 22.
Ver. 19.
Phil.4.13.12
6 having...; or, *not aiming at.*

maximum amount of highly legible text (for the size!) into the minimum space, while preserving all the 'quick reference' facilities and keeping the price as low as possible. That was the beginning of their problem, but by no means the end; for a public accustomed to the fine 'classic faces' in normal books had to be given types, for this special purpose, which should not look as if legibility had been won at any cost to the canons of proper letter-design.

In 1929 Messrs Wm. Collins Sons & Co. Ltd of Glasgow issued two Bibles in a new Brevier, specially commissioned from The Monotype Corporation. With little pretensions to 'elegance', this face nevertheless proved that the particular needs of the 'chapter-and-verse' Bible demanded special Bible type, and that the drastic abbreviation of descenders immensely aided legibility while assuring space-economy. This Brevier is not shown here. Meanwhile Messrs Collins have commissioned the far handsomer, and even more 'efficient' Fontana Bible face in which real dignity of letter-structure and a pleasant crispness of cut produce a notably attractive effect. Its appearance has met with very general approval.

In 1929 the Oxford University Press, with the collaboration of Mr Bruce Rogers, commenced the great task of producing the first 'deliberately fine' English lectern Bible since Basker-le. This noble edition appeared in 1935 in two volumes on l-made paper, and also in an unlimited edition in one e, which to many individual readers seems as satisfactory d Bible as they can buy — at no more than the cost of a adio, and less than the cost of the Oxford English y. The face is Monotype Centaur equipped with shortened descending sorts so that the normal 22-pt. could be

cast on 18-pt. The whole volume was keyboard-set; large display letters were specially cut.

In 1936 the Cambridge University Press issued a very successful edition, primarily for school use, called the 'Pitt 8vo'. Here one sees certain interesting departures from the 'reference-book' or 'typical Bible' style: the cloth-board binding, the absence of indentation before verse-numbers, the elimination of 'translators' italics', and above all the use of a decidedly handsome yet functionally efficient typeface. Indeed, this is the nearest approach which any 'documentary style' Bible has made to the 'normal book' style.

Messrs Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd of London brought out, in the autumn of 1936, the very successful editions set in their 'Royal Minion' type, specially commissioned from The Monotype Corporation. Here again, high legibility-for-size has been attained without any loss of dignity, and the pages have 'elegance' as well as reading efficiency.

Other specially-restyled editions from Oxford also deserve notice.

It must be remembered that comparisons between one of these new editions and another are impossible, as the *kind of use* (cross-reference, school, etc) varies enormously, and each edition is planned for one minimum-price category — the higher prices depending on special bindings. The proof that comparisons are ineffective lies in the fact that each of these distinguished new editions has been very cordially received by its special market.

Few printers now question the desirability of printing and publishing 'documentary' Bibles under special licence. Free competition in this field would make it impossible to guarantee

that a British-printed Authorized (King James) Version had received the most scrupulous and repeated proof-reading known to publishing. Printing itself conquered the scribes as much because of the safeguards from 'variant readings' as because of its speed of multiplication, and though every book house does everything in human power to avoid misprints, the Bible houses justify their 'privilege' (confined of course to the Authorized Version of 1611) by achieving a perfection of accuracy not often vouchsafed to human enterprise. If the edition were not 'documents bearing on a life-and-death matter', misprints in them would only be regrettable accidents — not disastrous, as they are in important documents.

FUNCTION OF FOOTNOTES

All Bibles printed for Protestant churches and Protestant readers are affected, in typographic style, by the attitude towards Scripture as a written record which created the separate Protestant churches: the willingness to appeal back to the document (even in translation) against a traditional interpretation. 'You *may* appeal direct to Scripture' naturally meant 'You *must* study the Scriptures', else the whole drastic split of Christendom into sects were unjustified. A Roman Catholic printed Bible in the vernacular must have footnotes, so that any possible ambiguities in the mother-tongue may be accompanied, *on the same page*, with the authoritative interpretation. The 'Douai Version', the authorized Catholic translation in English, has this special feature, but always appears in double column.

The Soncino Press has issued a fine Pentateuch and Haftorahs, i.e. the Books of the Jewish Law. The translation and the annotations (which are very important in this case) are set in

Monotype Times New Roman and make an admirably designed small quarto page.

It will be seen that the Bible, considered as a sacred archive, has provided numerous splendid examples of modern typographic planning — all the more modern because it is 'planning for a specific purpose'. Now when we turn to the other concept of the Bible — as a composite literary work — we may expect to see a different purpose ruling the design, and greatly altering the typographic style.

THE 'LITERARY' EDITION

The publisher of a 'reader's' edition starts with the knowledge that it is a physical impossibility to print 800,000 words in one extremely readable, normal book-style volume. At least 2,600 pages would be required, and a book that thick ceases to look or act like a readable book. In other words, the Bible which is printed primarily to do justice to great prose and verse must either be issued as a 'uniform set' of five or more volumes, or else it must be severely abridged. We have seen that abridgement is impossible, and the one-volume form practically imperative, to the Bible issued for religious use. But the 'literary' edition is not bound by the same rules. Once the tight-packed contents burst out from their single-volume confines, they appear as sixty-six different literary works, and both the original edition of Moulton's *Modern Reader's Bible* and the Dent 'Temple' Bible came out as 'sets' of individual Books (save for the briefest). But the public showed no avidity for sets of forty-four 12mo volumes. It welcomed, and has absorbed for a generation, the handy and readable Everyman's Edition (Dent) in four volumes entitled *Ancient Hebrew Literature* (in the

King James Version, but with the books rearranged according
to the subject) and the *Everyman's New Testament* in a single
volume in the same style. It admired the beautiful Doves Bible
in five volumes, and when in 1925 the Nonesuch Press issued
its famous edition (in Monotype Plantin 113, with copper
engravings by Stephen Gooden) in five small folio volumes
(including one of the Apocryphal books) the reception showed
what an amazing bargain these volumes were at the price of
30s each.

One of the finest of the five-volume uniform sets is the one
produced for the Limited Editions Club of New York in 1935.
Set in English Monotype Bell 12-pt., it looks dignified and
spacious without a trace of pomposity so far as the text is
concerned.

In 1925 Messrs Macmillan reprinted the great annotated
translation of Dr Moulton in a single volume of 1,733 pages.
A handicap to this edition, from the general public's point of
view, was the fact that even on this very large number of pages
and on this thin paper, it was necessary to set an abnormally
small size of type to a measure so wide as to clamour for lead-
ing. The one-volume *Modern Reader's Bible* sold well, but never
reached the 'best-seller' list and made no startling impact on the
non-religious public. It could not do so: the future of the read-
able 'literary Bible' lay on the other fork of the dilemma we
pointed out above. *Either* several volumes (cry the authors of
prose and verse), *or* one abridged volume. And the general
public, without much concern on the point of abridgement,
waited for a single-volume edition.

When this arrived in 1936, from the firm of Simon &
Schuster Inc. of New York, it became a spectacular success

almost overnight. *The Bible as Living Literature* offered the minimum commentary and abridged the text by about one third. The editor, Mr E. S. Bates, followed the admirable lines laid down by Dr G. L. Moulton, but used the King James Version. The type was specially cut for this edition by the Lanston Monotype Machine Company of Philadelphia; it is a version of Mr Goudy's handsome 'Deepdene' roman.

For months this handsome edition stayed on the list of 'best-sellers', outselling many of the most popular novels despite its higher price. In the autumn of 1937, Messrs Wm. Heinemann Ltd produced the same work under the title of *The Bible Designed to be Read as Literature*, in a similar format but using the fine Perpetua roman and italic cut by The Monotype Corporation. Monotype Perpetua titling makes a dignified appearance in the headings and dropped initials. The immediate and continued success of the American edition is being reflected in Great Britain. Thousands of general readers, to whom 'the Bible' had meant little more than a reference book, an object held while taking the oath, or a symbol brandished to rebuke their modern paganism, have at least made the immense discovery of the Bible as prose and poetry.

The five-volume New Testament published since 1935 by Messrs Dent, with wood-engravings by Mr Eric Gill, also deserves mention. It was hand-set in Joanna. The editor, Dr M. R. James, appends notes on the translation, which is that of the Authorized Version.

Messrs A. & C. Black published an edition of Ferrar Fenton's translation into modern English. To mention all the recent typographically-sound editions of individual 'books' of the Bible would lead us too far from the main problems of Bible

production, and pages would be required to describe all the different formats and editions which are demanded of the privileged houses.

In the truest sense, the opportunity of printing a Bible or any part of a Bible can be called a 'privilege', though it is given to any publisher so long as he does not use another publisher's copyrighted translation, or the Authorized Version. It is a privilege carrying formidable responsibilities as regards proof-reading and good, thoughtful design.

No book-lover has any reason to make-do with only one edition of the Bible. The volume in which he will be studying and comparing specific passages, or hunting-up a quotation, ought to be designed as an efficient one-volume reference book. The set of volumes to which he will turn for memorable reading-matter ought to tempt and comfort the eye typographically, as no omnibus reference-book of that length could possibly do. It is however possible to equip a multi-volume 'readers' ' edition with unobtrusive verse-numbers in the margin, as a concession to the reference-hunter. The two-volume Old Testament and one volume New Testament in Mgr Knox's admirable translation, as produced by Burns Oates & Washbourne, represent, in my opinion, the ideal typographic solution of the problem of taking the Bible out of the telephone-book class — making it look, that is, like something that one might *enjoy* reading — without throwing away the means of verifying a quotation by 'chapter and verse'.

AN ANTHOLOGY OF VERSE
AS A TYPOGRAPHIC PROBLEM

★

LET THE PRETTY METAPHOR serve: let the word anthology still mean 'a gathering of flowers', if only to remind us that there are all sorts of reasons for making mixed bouquets. There is the simple and natural impulse by which the evacuated slum child crams his fist with hedge-parsley: it is no less natural for any child of verse-loving parents to cram a dog-eared copy-book with poems. 'Love the wild rose and leave it on its stem', said Emerson, presumably addressing such grown-ups as are used to living in the country. A man with a very large library of Collected Works can afford to leave his favourite poems on their stems — if he can remember where each one grows. Not so the child who has only recently realized what pretty and covetable things poems can be, and how easily they can be *possessed*. Not so the young man in love, who has just realized how accurately certain poets foresaw what he would have to say to a young woman. Not so the soldier on his way to camp; not so any refugee. Such people will never leave their favourite poems on their stems. The luckiest of them, the ones with plenty of leisure and easy access-to-gardens, can go out and pick their own anthologies while they still have the chance. The rest of us have to depend on those professional florists, the publishers, for such ready-made bouquets as represent the nearest thing to what we, as individuals, would have picked if we had had the chance.

When I find that some compiler's notion of a verse-bouquet corresponds very closely to my own, I naturally envy that man not only his access-to-gardens but also his access-to-type; the finest handwriting with which I can copy out my own choice of verse is not so suitable for poetry as the impersonal, unvarying, and hence 'transparent' impressions of printing types. So I am irritated with my deputy-compiler if he, having picked such an admirable bouquet, fails to make the most of his great advantage, i.e. his ability to use typography instead of calligraphy. If I am to call him a true *compiler*, not merely a selector, I have every right to hold him finally responsible for the physical appearance of his printed book, and for every decision as to its style, choice of typeface, size of type, format, choice of paper — any physical feature which contributes or detracts from my enjoyment of the book, or makes it more or less of a money's worth. If the format and style were decided in advance by the designer of a 'series', then the compiler must still explain why he did not stand up for the typographic rights of his particular book. A man who has only to pick, arrange, and *present* other people's verse can hardly be forgiven for shirking the final third of his enviable duty on the score of typographic ignorance: if he has never had the sense to notice the effects of typography on the apprehension of verse, and has never taken the trouble to find out how those effects are produced, then to that extent he can be called an irresponsible compiler. A man as lazy as that, a man so narrowly concerned with his literary shop as to be unconcerned with what goes on in the printing shop, may very well be just as lazy in reviewing his sources, just as bigoted in his selection!

But when an anthologist does perceive his responsibility for

the typographic dress, he also perceives what an uncomfortable task he is facing. It is worse than 'thankless': it is one of those jobs in which you are constantly having to ask whose thanks you want, and whose reproaches (on the very same score) you can better bear: those of the poets, who first and foremost ask the typographer for *Lebensraum*, or those of the purchasers, whose obvious reason for wanting an anthology at all is the desire for *multum in parvo*. One reader may say that any lyric that deserves to be included at all deserves a page to itself, just as brandy which is worth the trouble of pouring out deserves a rolling-glass. It is a fiery distillate; it is an emotional event; it is at any rate a *pageful*, however much white space remains on the page. That reader will thank Mr Gerald Bullett for his manner of presenting *The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems*; but another reader will querulously calculate how many *more poems* Mr Bullett could have crammed into those 476 pages if they had been 'run on'. And such greedy calculations may be based on very timely imaginings: there is just so much space in a soldier's kitbag, just so much room in the back of the car, when you are hurriedly selecting the particular volumes that seem most worth rescuing when all your shelves are filled.

Of all the existing 'definitions of poetry' perhaps the most illuminating is the compositor's. Poetry is 'fat matter' as distinct from the 'solid dig' of prose. One has only to translate the term as 'matter which, for literary reasons, *has to be* set as "fat", i.e. in short lines ending in white space', to see that the term includes anything from such nonsense word-music as deserves to be easily 'sight-read', to good free verse, which is too intolerably concentrated to be set in a solid chunk. The very word 'verse' reminds us how much more consciously, in reading

poetry, the eyes are *reversed* to meet the fresh impact of each consecutive line. It is the poet himself who sees to it that the reader shall have a sense (however fleeting) of 'something ending, something new about to begin' at suitably short and frequent intervals *within* that whole event called a poem. Apparently the first and most difficult duty of the anthologist, as the responsible designer of the physical book, is to find some way of signalling 'beginnings and endings' in regard to poems *as* whole events — without unduly wasting space in the attempt. The worst thing that a printed anthology can possibly do — worse even than being needlessly bulky and costly — is to make it too easy for the reader's eyes to leap the gap between one poem and another. There is such a thing as inertia of the eye. The reader has to hurl his attention at a good poem, then brake his eyes to a dead stop wherever it ends. If another poem must follow on the same page, then by some means or other it must be made to look like a brand-new event, 'something about to begin'. If the poet never troubled to give it a title, the anthologist will have to invent one, and display it boldly at that, unless he can think of a better signal. A two-line dropped initial is surely a much better signal, as Mr Bullett's *Galaxy* proves. This book may not show the ideal dress for an anthology, but it scores very high as a printed book of verse. The type, Poliphilus, is just heavy enough to be small enough to ensure fairly long lines against breakage on an octavo page. A poem that is a page-and-a-half long is always allowed to begin on a verso, so that you can see the thing whole on the two facing pages. In the *Galaxy* you can even see it in two balanced halves; however high the bottom margin comes on the verso page, you know that the recto is a continuation, inasmuch as it does not begin

with a two-line initial. Mr Bullett, like Robert Bridges before him and Messrs Auden and Garrett after him, decided to present the reader with poems rather than Poets, Samples of. But notice his ingenious concession to the reader who hates having to do research work in the index in order to know *whom to thank* for a memorable experience. The name is whispered in italics, on a line with the folio number.

The Auden-Garrett anthology arranges its mixed bunch of wild roses and orchids by alphabetical order of first lines. And the poems run on with the minimum of typographic stop-and-go signalling. Some people who want to buy verse-bouquets as presents will think it looks too much like a textbook; but most poets abhor typographic 'fanciness' as much as they abhor 'reading with expression'. This is very decidedly a book for people who not only enjoy reading poetry, but also know how to go about enjoying it; who can dispense with typographic 'help' so long as they are guarded against hindrances.

II

The Ultimate Consumers, that is the readers, of poetry are (*a*) the poet's personal friends or relatives, and (*b*) poets — present or past. Fortunately there are thousands — indeed, hundreds of thousands — of people in any country who have, at some period of their lives, managed to write verse. It is a natural impulse — that of expressing an emotion or image in words, but with more intensity and poignancy than ordinary speech affords. At its feeblest, this impulse leads men to emphasize by profanity, and women to underscore every third word in a letter. In a higher grade of mind it is generally strong enough to welcome the struggle with rhyme and rhythm; and even if that

struggle ends in defeat, it teaches the learner that great verse is not 'easy' when it seems most spontaneous, and that even a jingle is, or can be, an exhibition of specialized skill. One in a hundred learns the tricks and composes verse. He should be encouraged to write more, and to have the best of his work printed — at his own expense. Not only does that provide interesting work for compositors, but also it increases the publishers' market for real poetry: the amateur poet soon fills the shelf on which his slender volume rests with the works of other contemporary poets.

And of these ones-in-a-hundred, perhaps one in a thousand has something to say, and the gift of communicating emotion to almost anyone who can read verse at all. These are the poets on whom a publisher can take a commercial risk. The risk is less today. It is not within our province to examine all the reasons behind the present increase of demand for good poetry, but one reason has a decided importance to the typographer. It is that the invention of broadcasting has enabled great numbers of people to LISTEN to verse.

All poetry is composed, as music is, to be performed out loud. To call poetry 'a kind of *writing*' is as irrelevant as calling music 'a kind of notation with dots and bars'. Long ago the poets discovered that the world had grown so large that their product would have to be frozen into the sound-symbols of the alphabet for the same reason that Argentine beef is frozen — so as not to decay in transit. It is still necessary to 'freeze' verse for transport, at least through time; but the reader who reads only for sense, who is not trained to listen to the sound and rhythms of words on the page, is like a stone-deaf man at the ballet. He can follow the plot, but cannot see why the actors jump about.

The first thing that our 'consumer' of verse asks of the typographer is that he should remove any removable difficulty from the never-too-easy task of reading the verse out loud — or at least with the inward ear well cocked. Printing verse means noting down word-music: reading it means restoring that word-music to its proper audibility or sound values. The printer's task is like the music-printer's: that of making it as easy as possible to 'sight-read' what is on the page.

This is the chief reason why a book planner feels disgraced if more than one metrical line in the whole book has to be broken — as the result of his indicating too narrow a standard measure. A verse is a line, and a 'line', in the poet's sense, is one whole thing or event separated from the next verse as one paragraph is separated from another: by a sufficient pause to show that something has ended and another thing is about to begin.

Indentation can help in vocalizing verse by warning the reader to expect a rhyme or a shorter line. Free verse has the greatest need of help from deliberate white space. A lolloping metre, with obvious rhymes, announces itself on the drum and the chimes . . . even when it is coyly disguised as prose. But some modern poets breathe down the compositor's neck, in their effort to make the reader co-operate. Italics, bold-face, small caps, letter-spacing, nowordspacing . . . all these and other optical devices can be found in certain contemporary verse.

A PRACTICAL TEST

Ancient free verse, composed before reading was common, was naturally shaped in short verses with implicit pauses. If there is not a general contempt for the Bible as literature, why the

general tolerance of double-column Bibles? Nothing could be optically more disastrous for verses than irregular, narrow double-column measure.

The Book of Job begins as a prose narrative. However (and in whatever language) it is printed, we can perceive the natural *forward flow* of prose; a new sentence begins with a link-word like 'Now . . . ' 'But . . . ' 'And . . . ' as if to prevent the reader from pausing. But once the scene has been set, the poem begins: we can 'hear' it beginning, even if it is typographically gabbled, thus:

Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him they came every one from his own place . . . And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great. After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day. And Job spake, and said: Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night which said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the light

Is it not abundantly obvious that something has happened half-way through that passage to alter the reading speed? After the brief transitional passage, has not the poem audibly begun? The printer need only make the change visible as follows:

and they rent every one his mantle; and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights; and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great.

After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.

AND JOB SPAKE, AND SAID:
Let the day perish wherein I was born,
And the night which said:
                    There is a man child conceived.
Let that day be darkness;
Let not God regard it from above,
Neither let the light shine upon it ...

The solemn music has announced its opening theme in deep,
slow chords that *cannot* be run together. The poet has seen to
that, as he always will. The sense of 'night', 'blackness', etc, is
invoked in nine consecutive lines. Gradually the tension in-
creases, but the 'night' never lifts: only at the climax it is
shattered by a succession of blinding flashes 'out of the whirl-
wind'; by verses as brief and terrible as thunderbolts —

                 Where wast thou
                    when I laid the foundations of the earth?
                 Declare, if thou hast understanding ...

Not one verse of that climax could possibly be mistaken for
prose, even for 'poetical prose'. It is thunder, but not one con-
tinuous rumble: after each flash and crash, there is a moment to
catch the breath.

Poetry is not necessarily 'that which rhymes' or 'that which
has metre and stress'. But it is, essentially, a form of expression
in which the *amount* of words which the reader is to take in at
one mental grasp is *measured out*, strictly and unmistakably, by
the composer himself.

One need not taste liqueur brandy to be able to deduce a great
deal about it. As it is not poured from a jug into a mug and so
down the throat; as it is measured out carefully *into a large glass*,
where it is warmed in the hands — evidently it has a pungent
aroma. Then it is consumed in sips; evidently it is too fiery a

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concentrate to be gulped down. And it is savoured as if the 'aftertaste' on the palate were part of its virtue. One deduces that it must be a distillation.

Poetry is also a distillation. Plain talk is like water, and good prose is like a fermentation — whether it be sparkling light wine or a rich old burgundy, much of its making was left to nature. But poetry is that much more artificial thing, a sublimation of essences, which requires special equipment, skill — and the kindling of fire. The word 'poet' originally meant 'maker', and the word 'artificial' here need only imply that more artifice, more *making*, must go to the job. One can realize that either by tasting poetry or — like the man who watches the cognac being consumed — by merely noticing how the stuff is properly served. In other words, it would be possible to arrive at the basic difference between poetry and prose by simply following up the compositor's hint that prose is mainly Solid Dig, whereas poetry is almost always Fat.

PLANNING THE BOOK

The planner of the book of verse starts off by noticing — or deducing — that poetry is more concentrated than prose, and therefore has to be absorbed more slowly. The poet himself will have helped to counteract the habits of the eye set up by prose-writers, whose art it is to carry the reader straight forward.[1] The verses will have been 'paused' by white space even in the manuscript. But the poet cannot always follow his work into the composing-room and suggest that leading be put between lines, and more than the normal space between words, as further ways of slowing down the reader.

1 Prose: from Latin (*oratio*) *prosa*, 'straightforward' speech.

In Dard Hunter's fine volume *A Papermaker's Pilgrimage* (to the Orient) one specimen is given the following note: 'In Japan this paper is cut into strips and used for the writing of poetry.' It is that kind of paper. And the note reminds us that the only really proper format for a lyric is the broadsheet. In that form, it can be set in a size large enough to slow down reading automatically — yet no line need be broken, as many pentameters would have to be if the noble 16-pt. of Bembo were set on a page even as wide as royal octavo. If a poem is not worth tacking up on the wall for as long as a single flower is kept in a vase, it cannot be a very good poem. In the Ideal State, small local printers would be kept busy with commissions for broadsheet poems, from people who wanted to memorize chosen verses by living with them for a while.

The word 'anthology' holds the image of a bunch of flowers. It is generally a very tight bunch, like the sheaf sent in by the gardener; the reader is expected to single out what he wants, as an educated Japanese woman is taught to select and arrange the day's flower-piece. Hence the anthologist can be forgiven the brutality of beginning a new poem in whatever space is left on the page where another poem ended. It is not at all forgivable to do that with a normal book of poems by one man.

In that case the typographer admits that he cannot simply devise a portfolio of broadsheets; he cannot even plan a splendid squarto, for the poet wants his verses to shelter under haystack and stop at country pubs. Portability is a virtue in a book of good verse. But the fact that each poem is a distinct and highly concentrated experience leads the typographer to treat each page (or, if necessary, pair of facing pages) as a miniature broadsheet for one poem. However short it is, a poem is worth a

page or nothing. Like a piece of music, it is shaped towards an ending, composed in a frame of time. The last verse is the point for which the reader's mind is held in suspense. If the poem just fills the page, he must turn the page to make sure it has ended. If it has, there is a sense of anticlimax: there is an even worse jolt for the reader who finds a poem continuing on the next page when he has imagined it ended on the first full page, and has therefore relaxed the tension of reading. Hence if the poet can be persuaded to arrange his sequence so that any lyric poem which goes down to the bottom margin or requires two pages shall always *start on a verso* page, it saves the reader confusion. A poem that needs more than two pages cannot be a lyric, and is generally able to carry the reader over the page without uncertainty.

The format is decided by all the considerations just given. Messrs Dent, after careful experiments, have fixed on a page measuring $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches for their admirable volumes of contemporary poets. Messrs Faber & Faber present a particularly brilliant galaxy of poets in demy octavo volumes.

PERPETUA: THE POET'S CHOICE

Once the page size is found, the proper measure for keyboarding is decided by having several of the longest metrical lines in the whole manuscript tapped off to experimental measures. The one which permits the longest metrical line[1] to be set without a break, when justified with as little as four units' space between words, is the right standard measure. If there are many

1 Free verse generally contains some lines which have to be broken. In that case it is better *not* to 'break by sense', or at the nearest pause, because that makes one line look like two lines. All the poets that I know insist that every line which has to be broken should run headlong into the right-hand margin.

lines nearly as long, then the four-unit minimum must be in-
creased to five. The normal lines are, of course, given standard
word-spacing: eight units is none too much for poetry.[1]

From such researches as I have been able to conduct, it appears
that Perpetua is the typeface most likely to appeal to poets. The
Dent series to which we have referred is all in this face; so is
Faber & Faber's handsome *Book of Modern Verse*, their *Collected
Poems* by T. S. Eliot, and *End of a War* by Herbert Read. As
early as 1932, the Cambridge University Press used it for
F. L. Lucas's *Ariadne* — a beautiful limited edition. Perpetua is a
delicate, clear, and unsentimental face — and the long descen-
ders hold the lines apart.

Bembo is the next favourite. It is a relatively narrow face (an
advantage in printing verse); but it is the sheer beauty of its
design that makes it seem so fit for the pleasures of poetry. John
Lane's anthology, *This Year's Poetry* (1935), Faber's *Poems* by
W. H. Auden and *The Rock* by T. S. Eliot, are among the im-
portant books in this face.

But the printer planning his first book of verse may have only
one 'classic' typeface — perhaps the ubiquitous Plantin 110,
which is not at all bad for the purpose if it is lavishly leaded. At
least he should prevent the poet-customer from rejecting the
simple in favour of something fancy that 'looks poetic'. Sir
Francis Meynell has perceived the suitability of the narrow,
rich vivacity of Times Bold for the verse of Gerard Manley
Hopkins. Sir Francis was once the leading exponent of the

[1] The abnormally long line is most often a pentameter consisting of nine or
more monosyllabic words, i.e. with perhaps eight word-spaces, each of
which can be equally reduced by automatic justification. It saves $2\frac{1}{2}$ ens — the
length of a short word — to reduce nine eight-unit spaces by five units each.

device of setting verse in italic. The advantages are: condensation of the line without reducing the word-spacing, and a certain look of 'differentness' from normal roman prose. But italic hurries because it is sloped; it is associated in many minds with febrile emphasis, and most italics have a certain fussiness of detail that amounts to interference. Blado is the noble exception — and the Nonesuch *Dante* and *In Memoriam* are both in this face.

Decorative initials, tail-pieces, etc, are dangerous unless they have been specially engraved on wood (not drawn) by a master. A running-head is almost impossible. Putting the page folios at the top leaves the bottom margin more elastic. Titles should be centred, not on the first line, but on the optical centre of the entire poem. Short-line poems should be indented, to balance the margins. It saves the compositor's time if any line of the manuscript that is longer than a fixed number of typewriter-letters is marked as one which will need to be justified.

Arguments on points of style are set to illustrate themselves, but the problems will vary with that tight bunch of flowers, an anthology, or the book of verse by a single poet. So let us view the problems in relation to the work to be designed.

ARGUMENTS ON POINTS OF STYLE
SET TO ILLUSTRATE THEMSELVES

Perhaps quotation marks that stand
"Outside" as here, are better planned;
For this effect is then prevented:
"The quoted line that looks indented."

Here are some unit spacings; first with THREE
And now with FOUR. Read on and you will see
How the FIVE-unit space, enough for prose

Or thin-diluted verse that quickly flows,
Can swell to six for Poetry. But wait:
Are SEVEN units for that "distillate"
Too generous a goblet? No, nor EIGHT!

Two-unit spacing overcrowds the line,
And agoraphobia begins with NINE.

BUTVIRGILSPUBLISHERSSAWNAUGHTAMISS
INPROUDHEXAMETERSSETFORTHLIKETHIS

One final knock upon the kennel
Where sleeps that pet of F*****s M*****l
Verse-in-Italic.   If the copy
Says `Brier` and `poppy` `..` `gorse` and `fennel`
(Like that), the Author's made it plain
That you must whisper that Refrain
In a "new voice"—italicized.
He does not *want it* romanized!

AN OBJECT LESSON

"His words are noble? But his Face
Is twisted in a sneer."

"He smiles and speaks with tranquil grace;
Shall we not stop to hear?"

[sight
"The line that must break is less ugly a
If it breaks at a pause,
and then lines from the right."

IMPROVING THE COMPULSORY BOOK

*

NOBODY EVER SEES A SCHOOLBOOK. It never enters into existence in the way that real books do, with advertisements and Press notices running on before, and reviews dancing attendance. No bookseller and no circulating library ever offers the new-born schoolbook an inch of shelf space, let alone the faintest hope of a display in the window or on the counter. But if you want to *see* a number of new schoolbooks you may go down Brixton way to the Spurgeon Orphan Homes, and pass under a stone gateway which says on one side THE LORD WILL PROVIDE, and on the other side, LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL EDUCATION OFFICER'S DEPARTMENT, SCHOOL EQUIPMENT DIVISION. Here you will find a large room containing neatly-arranged sample copies of all the current schoolbooks which have been passed by the L.C.C. both for content and as physical productions. The people-in-charge in such places as this — and the Educational Supply Association sample book library — are as touchingly delighted as they are startled to find a layman with opinions on the books that nobody sees.

Nobody . . . except, of course, those few millions of potential citizens whose aesthetic sense of fitness and taste can be refined or calloused according to the decency or repulsiveness of the particular printed books on which they will be forced to gaze, intently and receptively, not just for one afternoon, but for the best part of a year. Nobody ever sees a schoolbook but these

negligible, compelled readers . . . and, of course, the men and women who are paid to teach them.

Many years ago an article by the late R. D. Morss, 'The Neglected Schoolbook', appeared in *The Monotype Recorder*, and was widely reprinted.[1]

Its detonative effect is still remembered. Morss was a man who could have achieved fame as a book designer, had he not dedicated himself to that category of books which, at that time, was automatically barred from the temple of fame.

The English firm of Ginn & Co., under Morss's direction, evolved some principles of type-size-for-age, line-spacing, leading, and other points of style which seem as valid as ever today, and had the tribute of sedulous imitation in various quarters. During the war the paper famine played havoc with production standards, and perhaps for that reason no outcry greeted the appearance, from several houses, of a number of first readers set in sans-serif type with the kind of lower-case '**ɑ**' which is dangerously near in shape to an 'o', and the unfamiliar form of

1 In that article, Morss said: 'Fond parents, uncles and aunts *in extremis* frequently resort to children's books to solve a Christmas or birthday problem. Some choose them with great care, for their number and attractiveness increases every day. But for every gift book that moulds and influences the taste of one of these fortunate children there are hundreds of thousands of children for whom the schoolbook is the only avenue of escape from sordid and drab surroundings to those fields of cultural imagination and instruction which should be the special province and delight of the growing child.

'Childhood is an impressionable age. The impressions of childhood endure and are of the stuff that moulds later adult opinion. The schoolbook is, perhaps, of all the many conflicting elements in this sadly jaundiced world one of the most potent constructive (or destructive) tools in modern society. No longer can we afford to neglect the schoolbook.'

'**g**' which is so near to that of 'y'. Assuming that there can be some conceivable excuse for denying little children the extra legibility and extra discrimination-value of serifs, e.g. the distinction between cap 'I' and lower-case 'l', and supposing further that there *can* be some earthly reason for refusing the babes the help of curve-thickening in distinguishing shapes (c.f. 'I!l' and l!l), we then have to inquire whether the advantage of recognizing in print something similar to the '**a**' and '**g**' that one is learning to write is not more than cancelled-out by the psychological harm which may befall the young reader a year or two later, when he is supposed to have some confident familiarity with his letter forms and word shapes, and to be ready to start that indescribably important training for *quick* reading and quick comprehension which will so affect his chances of a successful career. It can scarcely be said to build subconscious confidence to have to relearn two of the letter shapes of the lower-case.

A remarkable, and to me a melancholy, number of infant readers published in recent years start off in sans-serif and then go over to normal roman in the second or third volume. I found one case of the use of a German sans-serif lower-case '**t**' which comes so near in shape to a non-kerning '**f**' that even an adult would be quite likely to misread it, in a tricky context. Surely that is theory-on-the-rampage? We are still hearing of boys and girls who are hopeless duffers at filing, or looking up names in the telephone directory, because the educational cranks thought they would read better if they didn't bother to learn the alphabet. Have the down-with-the-alphabet brethren shifted their ground to down-with-serifs?

The infant readers and other books for the youngest apprentices in the art of reading are by no means all designed by cranks.

Some of them are distinguished, or at least pleasant, examples of typographic presentation. The Ginn Beacon Readers well deserve their prestige. Pitman's new First Stage Readers start off in sans serif but achieve dignity by volume 2 in Baskerville and with some clever line illustrations by Elsie Eraut. Volume 8 unaccountably strays off into Gloucester Bold, but the final volume 9 returns to Baskerville. Macmillan's book *Talk, Tale and Song for Primary Schools*, Easy Study Series, has first-stage readers for 'young children who have made slow progress in the infant school'. The type page, in large Bembo, is decidedly attractive, but it is disconcerting to find page 1 beginning *in medias res* without title-page or prelims.

The New Vista Readers, published by Schofield & Sims of Huddersfield, set the first two volumes in sans-serif with the non-roman '**a**' and '**g**', and then go over to Baskerville. Facing page 1 are eight words in capitals: THIS BOOK IS EASY TO READ — TRY IT. When the backward children have deciphered these words in the consistent single-alphabet style of *litera capitalis*, they turn to the first story, and grapple with the dual alphabet (B, b) of ordinary reading. Oddly enough, no crank seems yet to have brought out a single-alphabet First Reader: perhaps because too many surnames like White and Brown, Baker and Tailor, Comfort, Read, etc, would instantly revert to their wild state as adjectives or verbs if the dual alphabet did not keep them in check.

Nelson's Speedwell Readers are well known as an inexpensive but pretty series. This firm is producing readers for African children, mainly in the vernaculars, and doing it well despite the need to use those founts of 'African Vernacular' type which look as if they had been invented last Thursday by somebody

who thought writing ought to be strictly phonetic. Much more interesting is their little book *Ikolo the Wrestler*, folk tales retold by a young Nigerian author.

The Old Thatch series, published by W. & A. K. Johnston, calls on the inexhaustible Enid Blyton and several excellent illustrators. Miss Blyton and Rose Fyleman are the authors of the Smith Family Readers, published by E. J. Arnold & Sons Ltd, where the American influence is seen in the illustrations, spreading rather recklessly over the margins in gay colours.

The London Supplementary Readers (University of London Press) are printed in Antwerp, and they make excellent use of Plantin 110. In the Happy Venture Readers, 1944, published by Oliver & Boyd, the lines are not justified. As in the Beacon Readers, the phrase or sentence which ought to be read in a single stroke of the eye is given a line to itself, with the advantage of standard word-spacing. The illustrations in book III of this series, by C. T. McCall, deserve special notice for the ingenious and successful way in which they use black as what amounts to the second colour, building up and intensifying the effect of the picture in the flat tone. The type is that uninspired but not unpleasing stand-by, Century Schoolbook. Harrap's 'Henry and his Friends' Series, 1940, is another that achieves a pleasant impression with the phrase-to-a-line system.

The First Readers have such fascinating psychological problems to solve that other elementary schoolbooks seem relatively uninteresting, but I found one publication called *Learning to Spell* (Harper of Holloway), a book 'for children aged 6 to 12', written by Irene Martyn, and illustrated by H. M. Brock, R.I., which seemed to me to deserve loud cries of welcome. Doubtless it is a schoolbook, but primarily it is a book for children and

for the fathers and mothers who know how much a little quiet coaching in spelling can help an ambitious youngster. Miss Martyn has remembered what almost all parents forget: that children almost instinctively personify letters, numerals, and a thousand other things that they work with. The picture of Helpful 'H' as a railway porter carrying the four suitcases 'c', 's', 't', and 'w', or of Fairy 'E' (at the end of a word) turning a short vowel into a long one, is impossible to forget. The book is set in different sizes of Monotype Baskerville and (offset) printed by Waterlow's.

Ginn & Co. provide a most competent restyling between their new English, and the old American, editions of David Eugene Smith's *Number Stories of Long Ago*. For older children there is a new series, *English To-day*, intelligently decorated in line by Charles Paine. And for the youngest, Messrs Ginn have just published the two oblong volumes of *Getting Ready for Reading*, devised by E. H. Grassam, and printed by W. S. Cowell. These contain no words, but the pictures train young eyes to move confidently from left to right, to notice differences between shapes, and to do other things which bring children with a running jump into literacy.

The Oxford University Press produces a large number of readers specially devised for children of the Commonwealth and Empire, with reference to the objects which the little black, brown, or white child sees about him. A restyling of a colour picture-book has its own interesting story. I am told that the artist, in Tanganyika, received from London a set of page proofs in double-spread form, trimmed to the correct size and accurately positioned, and sheets of the new grained plastic film which, being transparent, could be laid down over the proof

pages so that the illustrations could be drawn directly on the film, at the precise point where they were wanted, in just the right size, with just the shading that would mate best with the typeface (Monotype Plantin 110). The result is a remarkably friendly-looking, inviting page, well fitted both to the dazzle of tropical sunlight and the dim light of hutted schoolrooms. A black proof of the page with its illustrations was flown back to Tanganyika, where this artist drew on the second colour. When that proof returned, the colour was traced on to plastic and printed down to offset plates. Each side of the sheet was printed in a different second colour, so that black, red, green, and blue appeared in the book.

I believe that the O.U.P., and Messrs Cowell of Ipswich, who developed the plastic film for purposes of this kind, both feel that, despite the difficulties encountered in this long-range pioneer effort, the result is satisfactory. A book produced by offset lithography costs less, when it is printed in large quantities, than its letterpress equivalent, and there should be no variation in quality between the first and the millionth copy — and no temptation to milk a few more thousand copies from badly worn stereos.

SOME NOTES ON THE BRITISH
TYPOGRAPHIC REFORMATION
1919–39

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ONE DAY EARLY IN THE YEAR 1922 I presented myself at the factory and office of the American Type Founders' Company in Jersey City, N.J., armed with a letter from Mr Bruce Rogers to the Librarian and Curator (and Founder) of the A.T.F.'s almost fabulous Library and Museum: Henry Lewis Bullen. I had once before made the tedious journey to Communipaw Avenue, while I was an undergraduate at Columbia, to consult a rare sixteenth-century work on the proportions of capitals. I knew that the 14,000 volumes in the collection included historic fifteenth-century folios, unique type-specimens and early manuals of calligraphy, and glamorous examples of the 'Revival of Printing' by the great English private presses inspired by William Morris. And I vaguely knew that it also contained a lot of dull and incomprehensible stuff dealing with the problems of the ordinary commercial printer, who seemed to be much more interested in production-figures and something called 'Costing', than in the fascinating history and aesthetic of his craft.

But on this second visit I was no longer a nineteen-year-old sightseer. Bullen had advertised for an Assistant Librarian, and I was applying for the job. Some ninety others had applied for it, all of them trained librarians. I had no library experience, but I had that letter of recommendation from B.R., America's greatest book designer. In his own handwriting, too. I could

tell from the reverent air with which Bullen laid down the letter that the job was mine. Next moment he had pulled from a desk drawer a checked-linen duster and was thrusting it into my hands.

'Take this', he said, 'and dust all these books. I shan't mind if you stop and read anything that interests you; and you needn't read anything that bores you. But . . . ', he spoke with grave emphasis, 'take each one off the shelf and dust it'.

Oh, how wise are the Old who speak to the Young in riddles and let them work out the meanings for themselves! Particularly when there is a real 'discovery' involved. Bullen generously gave me the chance to discover for myself something that very few people realized in those days: that the trouble with printing as a whole was, that it *wasn't* a whole, it was still cut up into three separate worlds, with the 'art' people, the 'business' people and the 'technical' people each convinced that only their world really mattered. It took me years to realize how true that was then; and to perceive that all the really new contributions to the history of typography in our own generation would be instances of the new determination to break down those watertight compartments. That, in a nutshell, is the thing that has been happening, typographically, during the past few decades — very particularly in Great Britain. There are still elderly master printers who titter nervously at the word 'artistic'; there are still some old-fashioned connoisseurs who imagine that 'commercial' is a word of abuse; but nowadays such people 'date', whereas in 1922 they were the normal, typical members of their generation. My own assumption that 'fine' printing was important and interesting, 'commercial' printing dull and unimportant, was typical enough

of the aesthetic rank-and-file. But I accepted the symbolic duster and set to work.

And that is how it happened that when I came upon a little book by one Joseph Thorp, with the unpromising title of *Printing for Business*, I took it down off the shelf and conscientiously peeped inside.

I can assure you that no more dusting was done that day! That man Thorp had me spellbound in thirty seconds. He actually knew how to make modern printing technique sound understandable. And he could describe the design and manufacture of ordinary commercial printed matter with such fervour and sincerity and spirited earnestness that one began to feel that it *mattered* quite as much as any triumph in the limited-edition field. It was a turning-point in my life, that book: and, what is more to my present point, it was my first intimation that something had been going on in England, typographically, quite outside the gorgeous hot-house of the 'Revival of Printing'.

I have little need to tell readers about Joseph Thorp's electric gift of communicating enthusiasm, for in 1945 he gave his sparkling reminiscences of the 'significant period' 1900-14 in British Printing, when he and a few other gallant voices-in-the-wilderness were translating the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement into the terms of 'everyday' printing. At the end of his description he swiftly ran through some outstanding names and institutions of the epoch which followed — the interwar years — as if to remind us what an astonishing harvest followed the arduous tilling and seeding of the pioneer days. Now I have tried to provide some notes and recollections of this more recent period 1919-39; and I found the courage to do so by meditating very humbly on the rare opportunities I

was vouchsafed, to watch from behind the scenes a movement
which was nothing less than a major Typographic Reformation.

If my own narrative begins in America, it will all the more
naturally supplement and join on to Mr Thorp's, for he has
already told you that he and his colleagues took inspiration
from the American journals *Printing Art* and *Inland Printer*.
Henry Lewis Bullen was a major contributor to both. He was,
I think, the first person to realize and exploit the implications of
the Benton mechanical punch-cutter: it was he who invented
the phrase 'type family', and it was he and not D. B. Updike
who represented the real development of the great work of
Theodore L. De Vinne. It was Bullen who induced the Ameri-
can Type Founders' Company to bring out that excellent
paraphrase of the most ancient fount in the French National
Printing Office, the so-called 'Garamond' — the first deliberate
'period' revival of permanent importance since the resurrection
of Caslon's first old-face. With that face, and Cloister, and some
designs by F. W. Goudy, the A.T.F. had attained international
prestige well before my story opens. And meanwhile the work
of Bruce Rogers had come to be recognized in Britain as his-
torically important. Alfred W. Pollard's paper to the Biblio-
graphical Society in 1914 on the work of the earliest professional
'designer of books' (as distinct from 'printer' or 'publisher') was
a significant act of international homage, the first of its kind. It
is pleasant to realize that as I wrote these words, a similar signifi-
cant gesture was taking place in New York. The American
Institute of Graphic Arts had just presented to Mr Stanley
Morison its highest award of honour, a gold medal which had
never before been bestowed outside the country. Those two
transatlantic acts of homage remind us how the typographic

histories of the two countries are intertwined. S.M. is today not only the world's leading authority on typography and its related arts, but also the prime 'instigator' of that typographic reformation which owes so much to the Monotype Corporation's typecutting policy. In his speech to the A.I.G.A. he paid tribute to the American pioneers whom I have been mentioning, and spoke of his own sojourn in the States as typographic adviser to Doubleday, Page. As for B.R., one cannot leave him out of the British story, for he worked at the Cambridge University Press from 1917 to 1919, and returned here to supervise the cutting of his famous Centaur type by the Monotype Corporation, and the production of two of his masterpieces, the Oxford Jubilee Bible and the Lawrence translation of the *Odyssey*. Let us not forget that it was in Britain that B.R.'s Centaur (the only 'private press fount' that ever entered the canon of normal book typography) and F. W. Goudy's Goudy Modern (which many consider his masterpiece, perhaps his only permanent contribution to the classic *book* repertory) were made available to the printing world.

PORTENTS OF THE NEW EPOCH

With that much *apologia* I must get back to my adventure with the duster: for the first result of my joyous encounter with *Printing for Business* was, as I have said, a new curiosity about what was going on in England. I found a file of the *Imprint*, that pioneer journal of typography which had been killed by the war; and among other things I noticed that the editor, Gerard Meynell, had been very outspoken about the shortcomings and spiritlessness of British typefounders. Apparently their inability to rise to the challenge of the A.T.F. (and of the G. Peignot

foundry in Paris, whose pretty Cochin and Nicolas Cochin had appeared before the war) had driven the editor of the *Imprint* into the arms of the Lanston Monotype Corporation (as it was then styled); and the result was there before me — something called the Imprint roman and italic, obviously a good face and yet indubitably the product of that supposed menace to good typography, the type-composing machine. It was a sobering thought to one who had just entered the employ of a large and powerful typefoundry. I had heard about Mr Goudy's becoming the art director of the Lanston Monotype Machine Company in Philadelphia in 1921, and now I learned that both that company and the independent British Monotype Corporation were getting out a Garamond. And — something had indeed been happening in England. The Pelican Press, founded in 1916 under the aegis of the late George Lansbury and the *Daily Herald*, had been kicking up its heels in a series of highly entertaining manifestoes and specimens gaily written by Francis Meynell and weighted by the scholarship of Stanley Morison: and there was a springtime feel, an atmosphere of something beginning anew, in all that the printing office had done since 1919. For one thing it had discovered the charm of the old-time printers' fleurons or 'flowers', and their close relationship to types ('in fact, they *are* types'), and the novelty of those gay revivals contrasted with the sober simplicity of the pages of the *Imprint*. The Pelican Press had imported a first-rate repertory of jobbing faces, including Goudy's Forum capitals and the Peignot Cochins, to lend spice to a foundation of Monotype Imprint and Plantin: and it had also been the first in Britain to take advantage of the German typefounders' post-war bid for leadership in display fashions. The Narzisse outline letter was a

portent. Alas, in that Pelican Press repertory one might have read the intimation that the *baton* of leadership was about to pass from Communipaw Avenue. It was, in fact, destined to divide into two *batons*, for the Germans had perceived that the only future for typefounders lay .in the field of 'imitation-lettering', i.e. novelty jobbing-type, whereas the Monotype Corporation, having taken on Morison as typographic adviser, was perceiving what immense possibilities lay open to it in the cutting of classic book-faces.

In 1922 Charles William Hobson, one of the most influential figures in British advertising, founded the Cloister Press in Heaton Mersey near Manchester, with Morison as typographic designer and Walter Lewis as printer. Mr Lewis, who in 1946 retired from a most distinguished tenure of the office of Printer to the Cambridge University Press, had served with Ballan-tyne's and later with the Complete Press, a short-lived but important office which printed the *Studio*. The work of the Cloister Press was dramatically brought to our attention in America by the arrival of the *Manchester Guardian* Printing Supplement, written and designed under the Hobson aegis, with learned and lively contributions by Morison. It was at once brilliantly successful and distinctively British in style — a veritable announcement on trumpets that England was no longer a typographic province of America.

ENTER THE *Fleuron*

In 1923, Mr Oliver Simon, designer to the famous Curwen Press, decided to found a new printing journal and brought in Morison to help edit it and shape its policy: and with the *Fleuron*, the British Typographical Renaissance went into high gear.

It has been the fate of subsequent reviews of typography to be met by the critics with the cry of 'It's not the same as the *Fleuron*'. But nothing could ever be the same as those pivotal seven volumes, of which the last appeared in 1930. The *Fleuron* was not simply a second-generation *Imprint* of a British echo of *Printing Art*. What was new about it was that it was not another instance of a (highly-idealistic) *trade* journal, but of a new order: a journal exploring the roots and judging the fruits of typographic design. That ferment that Mr Thorp described, in the days when the specialist typographic designer was just beginning to emerge, had become too powerful for the trade to contain it. The unique qualities of the *Fleuron* became more obvious as Morison assumed more and more responsibility for the policy: the last three volumes were under his sole editorship. By a most allegorical co-incidence, No. 1 of the *Fleuron* contained a review by Stanley Morison of D. B. Updike's *Printing Types, their History, Forms and Use.* That urbane and scholarly book by the master of the Merrymount Press in Boston was based on lectures given before 1916, and by an accident of time it appeared in the very last year in which it was still *possible* (though it was no longer easy) to do what Updike managed to do — ignore the existence of mechanical composition, and ignore its momentous concomitant, the professional typographic designer '*per se*' (i.e. not a master printer). Hence those two richly-illustrated, charmingly-readable volumes, so valuable as a connected narrative of the whole *past* of typography, utterly failed to recognize what was most significant in the present and most clearly posited of the future of the art. Updike was the foremost surviving representative of the ancient tradition of the master printer responsible for the appearance of

all that went through his presses. One cannot, thank Heaven, call him the 'last' of that great line, for it will continue as long as business men remain capable of taking a creative pride in their work. The difference is that such men will now always be thought of primarily as typographers who happen to own printing offices, not as master printers living up to the moral responsibilities of their position.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NONESUCH PRESS

The year which saw the beginning of the *Fleuron* saw also the spectacular advent of the Nonesuch Press, whose moving spirit and typographical director was Francis Meynell. Everyone knows the story of its dramatic effect upon the book publishers: how the Nonesuch *Book of Ruth* and other limited-but-not-small editions skyrocketed from their very reasonable published prices to fantastic premiums as collectors discovered in them the glamour of 'fine' typography without the preciousness of the 'hand-press' tradition. We in America were at first inclined to see the Nonesuch Press editions as an English echo of the Riverside Press under Bruce Rogers, and missed the great point that no one printing office was responsible for the manufacture of these books. It was the first clear instance of the designer-*per se* assuming absolute responsibility for the final appearance of the book and treating the printing office as he treated the paper-maker, the illustrator, and the block-maker: simply as one technical factor in his equation. The Nonesuch Press used, and boasted that it used, the resources of modern machinery: of which the most important was the growing repertory of classic British Monotype faces. The effect upon other book publishers was immediate and salutary; there began that wonderful

'broadening-out' of the reform of book design, first to the normal reader's-book, then to those half-crown pocket reprints which have always been a peculiarly British achievement in publishing, and so on to a final triumph which would have been inconceivable in 1922: the Penguin sixpennies as examples of intelligent typography for the millions. And along that line of march (which was kept moving by the fundamental assumption that printing which reaches many people is *ipso facto* more important than that which reaches few), there came opportunities, in the early 'thirties, for two forays of rescue into the darkest corners of book production. Robert Morss of Ginn's lavished upon 'the Neglected Schoolbook' (the title of his important manifesto published in *The Monotype Recorder*) a degree of creative thought and research which would have made him famous had it gone to works with more snob-appeal: his challenge was taken up in America, where the American Institute of Graphic Arts began its admirable campaign on behalf of schoolbooks and textbooks. And meanwhile the principle that *nothing worth printing is negligible as a problem in design* had been applied in England to the ugliest and most depressing kind of reference-book of all, the Holy Bible. In swift succession, each of the licensed Bible houses commissioned a new typeface from the Monotype Corporation and did their best to invest this (typographically) most difficult of books with dignity and homogeneity.

I think it was in 1924 that I saw the writing on the wall for the typefounders. I was still with the A.T.F. but I was married to the late Frederic Warde, then director of the Princeton University Press in New Jersey, and we were together organizing an exhibition of 'survivals and revivals in typography'; and I

shall not forget the sense of revelation with which I stood back and examined the now-historic series of broadsheets from the Monotype Corporation in London — notably those of Poliphilus and Blado. In 1925 I made a lengthy stay in Europe, and in Paris I had the luck to discover material which solved the mystery of the origin of the 'Garamond' design. The resulting article, contributed to the *Fleuron* under the pseudonym of Paul Beaujon, brought me opportunities for further research and I was eventually invited to edit *The Monotype Recorder* in London. Thenceforth I was a part, though a minor and ancillary part, of what I had hitherto been observing from the point of view of the rest of the world.

All I am trying to do here is to stress those things which were new and characteristic in this most crowded period of change; so I am leaving out much of importance that members of the printing trade could be expected to know of their history — and many tributes that belong here, to great British 'creative printers' who played an active part in the reformation. What is not sufficiently realized is that the industry as a whole was very slow to perceive what was going on. I remember a conversation in 1927 with the head of a very large and well-known printing office, in which I learned for the first time that the great St. John Hornby of the Ashendene Press was also a director of W. H. Smith & Son, while my *vis-à-vis* learned for the first time, with a certain mild astonishment, that the great St. John Hornby of W. H. Smith's was also the owner of a private press! One could hardly find a better example of the persistence of those 'watertight compartments': but in the following year they were cracked by one of the most significant events that I can remember in this whole period. Alfred Langley, former

President of the B.F.M.P.A. and at this time protagonist of its Publicity and Selling Committee, induced Stanley Morison to address that Committee's session at the annual convention at Blackpool, 1928, on the topic 'Robbing the Printer', and the programme of that session, designed by the speaker in a deliberately anti-conventional style, showed the first use in England of Eric Gill's new sans-serif, designed at Morison's instigation for the Monotype Corporation. Nobody who was there will ever forget the way in which the older master printers rose to the provocation of that programme and attacked it for not being 'artistic', while the younger men pondered the speaker's warning that publicity and jobbing typography could not afford to be bound to the conventional rigors of the book printer but must seek novelty and effectiveness at all costs. Agents and middlemen, publishers and experts had been 'robbing the printer' of his privilege of responsibility for typographic design, and had been able to do so because (in effect) they did not recoil in horror from a new thing like Gill Sans! It was a gorgeous row, fought out in high good humour for the most part: but the late J. R. Riddell, then head of the London School of Printing, was really bitter about it. He had always looked with unconcealed contempt upon the new Colleges of Arts and Crafts that were springing up from the mighty root of the London Central School of Arts and Crafts (notably Camberwell and Birmingham). Riddell, a valiant and vivid personality and a distinguished technician, was I believe the last really formidable representative of the 'watertight compartment' epoch. He had that characteristic superstitious-respect for all that was represented by the fatal word 'artistic' — and all the resentment of the technician at finding 'artists' (creative men) straying out of their

compound and asking embarrassing questions about the design of ordinary bread-and-butter printing.

But the long fascinating tussle between men like Riddell and the second-generation of the Central School tradition is a story in itself which deserves a full-scale memoir. Here I must return to the portent of Gill Sans, the first important jobbing face to challenge the German primacy in inventiveness. Too many people assume that 'modern sans-serif' was a German origination, forgetting that it all started with the design for the London Underground, by Edward Johnston, of a fine sans-serif which was part of a far-reaching functionalistic aesthetic policy (embracing architecture as well) instigated by Frank Pick. While Gill Sans was still in its infancy as a few founts of titling capitals, C. G. Dandridge of the London & North Eastern Railway saw in it the basis of a complete redressing of the thousands of 'pieces' of printing — from timetables to posters — and of the station-lettering used by that vast transport system; and before that standardization was finally achieved, Gill Sans had become a family of no fewer than seventeen related designs.

With the best typographic brains of the country concentrating on the problem of rescuing timetables from Victorian smugugliness, we had come a long way from the days when only books (and only a certain kind of book) seemed worthy of any blood and sweat. And in 1931 another wall was broken down: *The Times* determined to adopt a new dress based on a typeface designed for maximum legibility under newspaper conditions, yet one which could be judged and admired by the high standards of book typography. That was an unprecedented decision, and the fruit of it, *The Times New Roman*, has come to be recognized as the most impressive answer (of several answers)

to the question often asked in the 'twenties: 'Must our twentieth century be content to pillage good designs from the past—will all its own new contributions be in the ephemeral jobbing field?'

We see now that the 'appeal to history', which in a sense began with Theodore L. De Vinne and worked out as a series of more or less facsimile revivals of great faces of the past, was a most necessary defensive move against the fatal facility of the Benton punch-cutter and all the other aesthetically destructive influences of the nineteenth-century machine-age. The roots of typographic inventiveness had been starved, it needed the compost of its rich past. After a generation in which the public's eyes became accustomed to really good (though historically derivative) typography, it became possible to innovate. I like to remember that D. B. Updike, who never even mentioned Times New Roman in his (rather sketchily) revised edition of *Printing Types* because (as he merrily confessed to me) he could not imagine that a 'newspaper type' could be worth looking at, nevertheless did eventually look at it, and was the first to import matrices of it to America, and wound up his long and august career with a series of brilliantly-varied books and jobs in that face, produced on that composing-machine whose existence he had so long and so delicately ignored. Indeed, I may end this fragmentary story with a reference to the present 'cult' for Times New Roman in America, if only because it reminds us that this most fertile period of British typography has not been a merely local reformation. It would not have been worth recording if it had been only the story of how 'the British, *too*', set their typographic house in order. Let me speak as an American, or rather in the global language of the 'English-speakers' as a whole, in reminding the younger readers — and

above all the younger 'creative printers' who are carrying the Typographic Reformation through to its logical goal in the handbills of the obscurest provincial shopkeepers — that their work may well be inspired by the sort of national pride which is the very opposite of raucous nationalism. 'What happened' in this epoch was the application to typography of the cardinal principle of democracy, the notion that the Many matter more than the Few. For a thousand years this island has been edging the world towards that concept: and it is not surprising that it should have shown the world how far the 'thrill' of *effective graphic communication of thought* could be carried beyond the fine-book field into the millions of hands of the common people.

THIRTY-TWO OUTSTANDING DATES

★

The following paper, read at a prize-giving at the Guildford School of Art and Crafts in 1947, was primarily intended to serve as material for a little experiment in adolescent psychology.

The students were to be given the manuscript to design and print as a handsome little booklet, in which they would have an elementary chronological framework on which to hang any bits of knowledge that might come their way, as to the glorious history of their craft. But such a framework is only valuable in so far as it is committed, not to the printed page but to memory. There is no worse enemy of the essential spirit of craftsmanship than the notion that a man's knowledge can be gauged by what he could 'look up in a book'. Yet no healthy-minded lad can be flung a double-handful of dates and told to memorize them, as part of an otherwise strictly 'practical' course of technical training. One must first of all convince him that the whole idea of thinking of his job with reference to its history and background is, after all, a 'practical' idea: after that, he will be ready to admit that the effort to memorize a few dates is not a waste of time.

At this point comes the opportunity for a little mental jujitsu. The boy is still, as it were, leaning forward to resist the impact of 'too many dates': cunningly giving way, the teacher lets him tumble over himself at the challenge to strike out *as many dates as possible from the list, on the ground that no ordinary apprentice should be expected to commit them to memory.*

That is how Mr T. J. Cowley, then head of the Printing School at

Guildford, went about it. The students were shown the manuscript of my paper and challenged to pick out of it, after due discussion, not more than ten dates, *out of thirty-two, that they would consider important enough to be printed in a second colour in the outer margin where they occurred in the text, as a signal that those were worth engraving on the memory.*

You can imagine what happened. After much furious discussion, the class came to the conclusion that ten just wasn't enough. Could they, please, raise the limit to fifteen? Mr Cowley, with a proper show of reluctance, made the concession: and jubilantly confirmed to me my theory that before such a battle-to-eliminate ended, the whole class would have all thirty-two dates at their fingertips.

THE MOST PRACTICAL REASON for looking back over history is that it helps us to look forward into the future. From history we gain knowledge of events and tendencies which help to explain what is really going on today and what is likely to come about tomorrow. A man who tries to prepare himself for future events without any reference to the past is as much handicapped as a man who takes a standing jump instead of going back for a running jump. Hence the reference to history is an essential part of any education, liberal, professional, or technical. But it is also part of moral training: for the person who is willing to confess a contemptuous absence of curiosity and interest in the lives and achievements of the pioneers who have made it possible for him to earn his own livelihood, is guilty of ingratitude.

The question we are asking ourselves is, what minimum amount of knowledge of the history of printing should be imparted to every apprentice in the printing trade as an indispensable part of his preparation for a career?

We are not asking how much history should be taught in the training schools. When we speak of *every* apprentice, we must include those whose only craft training is acquired in the shop. Granting that the trade has the responsibility of imparting some minimum amount of knowledge as well as skill to every apprentice, the question arises: What is the minimum amount of historical background that must be imparted, if not in school, then by talks, lantern-slide lectures, etc, in the printing office itself?

We can begin by assuming something that is true of every trade or profession: that the person who is training for that walk of life should fairly be expected to have two dates (precise or approximate) by heart. He must know how long his trade has been in existence (*a*) anywhere, (*b*) in his own country. In this case, therefore, one could expect any tolerably educated compositor or machine-minder to be able to mention the decade of the century in which movable type and the printing press came into being in Europe.

So we can start with the traditional date 'round about 1440' for Gutenberg, and add 1476 for Caxton. Now we can rapidly consider what it was that happened 'round about 1440', and then ask what major events have taken place in the intervening five centuries. I shall propose a number of significant dates, and it will be for you to decide which of them is important enough to be singled out as one of the ten that any educated member of the trade should be able to tick off on his ten fingers, as the major events in the history of printing.

Translated into our Christian system of reckoning, A.D. 105 is the traditional date for the discovery of paper. In a fascinating book by Thomas Francis Carter, *The Invention of Printing in*

China and its Spread Westwards, you can read of the thousand-year-long journey of the secret of paper-making from China to Western Europe, with A.D. 175 as the pivotal date, when the Arab conquest of Samarkand carried paper across the east-west watershed of civilization. By 1100 it reached Fez, by 1391 there was a paper-mill in Nuremberg. The existence of this relatively cheap and plentiful substance, paper, made the invention of printing practicable. The first printed things that came to Europe by the caravan routes were playing cards and other images printed on paper.

No one can set a date for the beginning of printing without drawing some arbitrary line between simple impression with a seal or stamp and the printing (e.g. rubbing-off from a wood block) of entire messages. The traditional date assigned by early Chinese writers for their invention is, in our reckoning, A.D. 594; actual surviving block-prints on paper date back earlier than the eighth century of our era. The earliest printed book of which any copy survives can be seen in the British Museum: the Buddhist *Diamond Sutra*, a scroll pasted together from leaves rubbed-off from wood-blocks. The fact that it includes a magnificent frontispiece and a dated colophon indicates that it is no crude primitive effort.

It is interesting to realize that there are Chinese and Korean examples of printing from movable types, whether of earthenware, wood, or bronze, as early as the tenth century; but what is perhaps more significant is the failure of that method to prosper in countries where each one of thirty thousand or more different words is represented by a different character.

But the alphabetic system of writing, probably the greatest invention of the occidental world, was based on the notion that

with only a handful of arbitrary sound-symbols anybody can write down and read off the *sounds of* any number of thousands of words, in any language — a tremendous advantage to merchant traders. The real future of movable type lay latent in the twenty-six 'movable' (combinable) phonetic symbols of the alphabet. It is hard to think of a more momentous event in human history than that which took place when the Eastern invention of printing (mechanical multiplication from a relief surface) joined forces with the Western invention of what amounts to sound writing — the alphabet.

This is not to say that people in the West were merely marking down combinations of twenty-six sound-symbols as late as that. The ancient Romans were still so 'ear-minded' in reading that one alphabet of capital letters could serve their purpose and the lines could be WRITTENLIKETHIS in the assurance that the reader, pronouncing the sounds under his breath as he went along, would distinguish the separate words. It was during what we call the Dark Ages that Christian scholars superseded the clumsy scroll with the familiar stitch-bound book of pages of separate words, and evolving a dual-alphabet system which enables us to see things with the eye on the page that we could not get through the ear — notably the difference between a *god* and God, *brown* as a colour and Brown as a person, and *queen* bee and the Queen, etc. Minuscules, what we now call lower-case characters, were being standardized throughout the Empire of Charlemagne by Alcuin of York, round about A.D. 800 — an easy one to remember, and perhaps an important one, because five centuries later, when Alcuin's day seemed even more remote than Gutenberg's day seems to us, the penmen of Italy turned back for inspiration to that round, clear minuscule and

the simple straightforward capitals of the eighth-century renascence with the same kind of reverence for what was 'antique' that was sending scholars of the humanistic revival back to the golden prose of Cicero, and to the newly rediscovered Greek classics. The roman and italic that we read today descends from the revival of what the Germans still call 'antiqua' as distinct from the heavy compact Gothic letters associated with church and legal lettering.

In Germany, however, midway of the fifteenth century, the Gothic letter still prevailed, and its angular, bold consistency made it a relatively easy set of shapes to cut in metal.

Some time before 1440, Johann Gutenberg, as an exile in Strassburg was working with the help of a goldsmith and (probably) a converted wine-press, leading to the invention which was to change the history of Europe and make the democratic system of government practicable by opening up the road to universal literacy. Three different things had to be invented or contrived: a mould for casting letters in metal from female dies; viscous ink that would adhere evenly to the metal faces of the types; and, what was apparently quite new in history, the printing-press, or means of transferring prints from the whole composed surface by all-over pressure instead of by hand-rubbing. I think it is worth putting among our 'essential' facts that the inventor seems to have been working for a means of cheaply multiplying humble schoolbooks: the notion of applying the process to the production of luxurious and magnificent books apparently did not arise until Gutenburg returned to Mainz and had Johann Fust as his financial backer.

Another date that one is expected to have by heart is 1470. In that year German printers set up a press at the Sorbonne, and

Nicolas Jenson, master of the Mint of Tours, printed in Venice his first book in his famous roman type. We have already mentioned 1476 as the year in which Caxton brought printing to England.

1495-9 marks the evolution of the Aldine form of roman which was to be the prototype of the whole family we call Old Face; and just as that happened at the turn of the century, so the 'modern' style of type with horizontal serifs emerges at the French Royal Printing Office in the years 1698-1702. The English printer should know the date 1757 as that of the publication of John Baskerville's first book, since this was the beginning of Britain's international prestige in typographic design.

The eighteenth century was the beginning of the system of measuring type sizes by arbitrary points instead of merely identifying sizes by names. The decade beginning in 1785, when the French Revolution was encouraging a good deal of logical rethinking, will be remembered as having put a line of division between all printed books. Those produced before that date are bound to look 'old' to us because of the long '∫' used, except at the end of words. 'Modern' type, which has no long 's', had superseded what we still call 'Old Face' by the end of the eighteenth century. In and after 1844 the softer, smoother Old Face began to come back into use — at first complete with its long ' ∫ ', as an antiquarian novelty, but eventually without it as a pleasant alternative to the ordinary sharp-cut roman of the day. Never again, in Europe, would there be one standard and universal style of roman and italic; and eventually, when the hot-metal composing-machines came in before the end of the nineteenth century, it would become possible for a book printer

to offer a publisher almost as rich a variety of different romans and italics as a jobbing printer had long been offering in the way of fanciful faces for handbills, etc. But as long as books and newspapers had to be set up by hand, using tons of pre-cast type, the most that could be expected from a book printer was the choice between 'modern' and 'old style'.

The nineteenth century gives us a constellation of major events in technique: 1798–1803 for the production of paper in endless web (Robert in France, the brothers Fourdrinier in England); the century year 1800 reminds us of the Earl of Stanhope and his iron printing-press and the development of stereotyping. Senefelder's invention of lithography was patented in England in that year.

Next to 'circa 1440' 1814 must rank in momentousness. In the office of *The Times* at Printing House Square, Koenig's cylinder flat-bed printing machine was driven by steam power, and production of sheets leapt from 300 to 1,100 an hour. The first rotary press came in 1848, the Hoe press in 1856. The process of pulping wood to make paper was invented by Keller in Germany in 1840. As printed matter became cheaper and more plentiful, the illiterate third of the population came over into literacy. From 1822 onward there were attempts to mechanize type composition to keep pace with the newly mechanized press. Line-casting composing machines (Ottmar Mergenthaler's Linotype) were coming into use in 1886; Tolbert Lanston's Monotype machine for single-type composition was evolving from 1887 and came on the market in 1899. Both methods were made practicable by Benton's invention of the mechanical punch-cutter, one of the key dates in the history of typography, 1885–6.

Of events within living memory, we might single out 1888 as the date of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in London, and 1891 for the sake of the world-wide interest in 'fine printing' aroused by the productions of the Kelmscott Press.

The first professional typographic designer who was neither a publisher nor a member of the trade was Mr Bruce Rogers, who started work with the Riverside Press in the year 1900.

In 1913 the cutting of Monotype Imprint gives us our last crucial date; after that it became possible to think of mechanical composition as an instrument of creative craftsmanship.

There are thirty-two outstanding dates, and I leave to you the fun of singling out the ten or twelve which you consider so important that they ought to be memorized by every apprentice as part of his craft education.

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TRAINING IN TASTE

Introduction to a film strip

PAUL BEAUJON

SELECTED WRITINGS

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