

Review Articles

Books About Books

English Books & Readers, 1475 to 1557. Being a study in history of the book trade from Caxton to the incorporation of the Stationers' Company. By H. S. Bennett. Cambridge, The University Press, 1952. \$7.00.

Samuel Richardson: Master Printer. By William M. Sale, Jr. Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1950. \$5.00.

Papermaking in Pioneer America. By Dard Hunter. Philadelphia, The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952. \$6.50.

A Bibliography of Canadian Imprints, 1751-1800. By Marie Tremaine. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1952. \$10.00.

Books and Printing: A Treasury for Typophiles. By Paul A. Bennett. Cleveland & New York. The World Publishing Company, 1951. 417p., \$7.50.

In some of the review articles which I have contributed from time to time to *C&RL*, continental books have been given a good deal of attention. This was a natural result of long years of interrupted communication caused by the second World War. It was important to trace the course of continental European bibliographical and book arts studies during and after the war and to reestablish the broken links of cultural intercourse. In these matters we have now returned to nearly normal conditions.

No special effort was necessary to collect for the purpose of the present review a number of interesting publications dealing with the English and American tradition in bookmaking. They formed a natural group in which one or two titles of not quite so recent vintage found their proper place.

The Cambridge University Press has been especially active in the field, producing a number of publications which promise to become permanently valuable additions to the bibliographical reference shelf of the scholarly library.

H. S. Bennett's *English Books & Readers* is a work which contains an astonishing amount of information, most of it never before combined into a coherent unit. The strength of this book lies in the newness of the author's approach, his inquisitiveness about the reasons

why printed books came into being in England; what caused them to be written in the first place; how they got selected for publication; what the role of the patron was in this process; what the author got out of it; what social classes the readers of various types of printed books belonged to and what their education was; whether Church and State hindered or encouraged the booktrade and how and why; and many other related major and minor questions.

The weakness of the book, it seems to me, is a result—and perhaps an inevitable one—of its strength. It stems from Mr. Bennett's concentration upon the British scene. It is probable that the student of English literature and the bibliographer specializing in English books and printing will hardly miss references to the continental scene. But if one is interested in the whole aspect of Western book history, in the gradual unfolding of the powers of the press and in the changes which printing effected in Western culture, then one misses something in this book. There are many points in *English Books & Readers* which invite comparison with conditions in France and the Netherlands, with Germany and Italy. Only through comparison would it be possible to see clearly at which date and in terms of what issues the English book trade ceased to follow continental precedence and took the lead in its own characteristic way. But one thing is certain: Mr. Bennett's thorough work has furnished a solid basis for this kind of evaluation to be undertaken in the future.

English Books & Readers makes excellent use of previously published studies, integrating the material in a fresh and convincing manner. The main new source of information are the Forewords, Introductions, Dedicatory Epistles and other "Front Matter," found in the early books themselves. These are studied, commented upon and quoted in such a way as to bring into this work a sustaining element of authenticity and immediate contact with the lives and times of the early English writers, printers, publishers, patrons and readers. There are appendices of considerable extent and usefulness: a "Handlist of Publications by Wynkyn de Worde, 1492-1535"; a "Trial List of Translations into English printed

between 1475-1560"; a "Bibliography" and a "General Index."

At least passing reference should be made to two other Cambridge publications, each of them dealing with a more specialized aspect of book production in England: J. Basil Oldham's *English Blind-Stamped Bindings*, 1952 (\$27.50), in which the librarian of Shrewsbury School describes "many new groups of bindings that may be attributed to particular craftsmen or binderies" and for which he devises his own method of ornament classification and description, a system that may well prove adaptable to other schools and other countries; and Arthur M. Hind's *Engraving in England in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries*, 1952, of which Part I, The Tudor Period, has so far been issued.

Perhaps the greatest importance of these two publications will be their contribution to the question, why England did not enjoy equality of rank in the graphic arts with other European countries from the 14th to the end of the 17th century. It is generally recognized that the eighteenth century restored the balance and saw once more leadership in certain branches. We are well informed on the contribution to English graphic art of such figures as Caslon, Baskerville and Bell, of Hogarth and Blake, and of the English university presses. But the contribution of the individual printer of books in this century has not been too clearly underlined by monographic treatment.

When we take up Professor William M. Shale's study of *Samuel Richardson: Master Printer*, we wonder why such rich material has had to lie unused and unobserved for so long. This does not mean that it was all on the surface and ready to be gathered in by anyone who happened to come along. A key was needed to open this treasure house of information. In the case of Richardson this key was in the hands of the Professor of English at Cornell. He knew Richardson the novelist, but was searching for Richardson the man. This was the quest that led to Richardson the printer.

Professor Shale started with the knowledge of his fiction which "shows his extraordinary awareness of class differences, his sensitiveness to human problems that arise from the interpenetration of classes. . . . If we are ever to see more clearly the meaning that his fiction had for his own century and that it may have

for ours, we must see more clearly how his fiction rendered the conflicts he saw in his own society. We cannot gain this knowledge, however, by divorcing the man from those activities that were the major preoccupation of his life."

Richardson's career as a printer is set forth in this book with thoroughness and precision. It is not a straight annotated biography, fortunately, but a systematic concentration of the facts around a number of focal points. Each of these illuminates a specific aspect of Richardson's position in the world and his relationship to the society in which he lived: His activities as a printer of periodicals, his government contracts, his work for the king, relationships with the trade, and with the people who worked for him over the years.

A substantial portion of the nearly 400 pages of the book are taken up with lists and appendices. Chapter VIII contains "A List of Books printed by Richardson," both in alphabetical and in chronological arrangement, a total of no less than 516 titles. Chapter X is "A List of Book-sellers Whom Richardson Printed." There is also a list of "Richardson's Apprentices," "A List of the Law Patentees," "Notes" and "Index."

Special attention is paid to the ornaments used by Richardson, because they proved the most reliable means of identifying the products of Richardson's printing office. The occurrence and condition of these ornaments is traced with the most meticulous care and the question of unauthorized recutting is carefully considered. New bibliographical territory is explored here and it is not an exaggeration to say that this book is an important pioneer work in the identification of 18th century imprints.

During Richardson's lifetime American printing and bookmaking were advancing steadily on the road towards greater independence and self-reliance. When Richardson printed his first book in London in 1719, most American printers still had to import their paper from England. Only in Pennsylvania was domestic paper obtainable. By the time the last books issued from Richardson's press in 1762, papermaking had started in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maine and Virginia.

Dard Hunter's *Papermaking in Pioneer America* is the source for this and every other kind of information about the beginnings of this important industry. The book is based on the lectures which Dard Hunter delivered

as Rosenbach Fellow in Bibliography, which in turn were built from materials gathered by him for many years for a large folio volume on the subject. The present book will be welcomed by many as a compact, handsomely printed and illustrated (and reasonably priced) introduction to the subject of papermaking in America.

During the lifetime of Samuel Richardson there occurred another significant step in the growth of the printing press in the North American colonies: the beginning of printing in Canada, marked by the establishment in 1751 of a small press in Halifax by Bartholomew Green of Boston. From that time until the end of the 18th century, sixteen printing offices were operating in Canada, and of these nine were still functioning by 1800. A few years less than twenty years ago Marie Tremaine started a study of Canadian life towards the end of the 18th century. The ultimate consequence of these interests lies now before us in the form of the most impressive *A Bibliography of Canadian Imprints, 1751-1800*. A brief, but skilfully written Introduction summarizes the nature of early Canadian printing; from which it becomes apparent "that the staple product of the earliest Canadian presses, as of colonial presses elsewhere, were newspapers, almanacs, law and legislative publications, handbills, printed forms, and those kinds of educational and religious publications for which there was a substantial market."

The Bibliography is organized in two groups, one of them "imprints," which includes books, pamphlets and broadsides, arranged chronologically by years, and alphabetically within each year. There are no less than 1204 items in this group, which includes not only publications now extant but also those which are recorded in some source as having been issued. The facts for their inclusion is always carefully explained. It will be inevitable that avid collectors of Canadiana will forever onward hope for the discovery and acquisition of some of these elusive items.

The products of the periodical press, newspapers primarily, form the second (and much smaller) group in the *Bibliography of Canadian Imprints*. The items are described in great detail and with what appears to be admirable care. The bibliography of Americana has undoubtedly received a very significant addition through the publication of this

important volume which was most certainly a labor of devoted love.

In conclusion there should be a reference in this article to at least one publication dealing with current matters. It is easy to be enthusiastic about Paul Bennett's *Books and Printing: A Treasury for Typophiles*, because this book, which appeared in 1951, has had time to prove its worth. It was reviewed at some length in the October 1952, issue of *College and Research Libraries* by Edward C. Lathem. In my own experience as a teacher of graphic arts I found it most useful in giving a lively, many-sided and colorful insight into the methods and processes not only, but also the thoughts and beliefs behind the procedures by which books are built today. The book is "simply" a collection of shorter articles or pamphlets, each of them by a different printer, designer, illustrator, commentator or historian or critic, whose piece attracted attention at the time of its first appearance and was judged fit to be reread by the editor. With very few exceptions his judgement was sound. *Books and Printing*, which looks very little like a textbook is, nevertheless, an excellent textbook in the good sense of the word.—*Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, New York, N.Y.*

Militant Liberal

R. R. Bowker: Militant Liberal. By E. McClung Fleming. Introduction by Allan Nevins. Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1952. xv, 395p. \$5.00.

When Richard Rogers Bowker died in 1933 at the age of 85, the editor of the *American Book Collector* wrote that Bowker's life was "perhaps more closely interwoven with books than anyone else's now living." In *R. R. Bowker: Militant Liberal*, E. McClung Fleming, dean of the College at Park College, Parkville, Missouri, has vividly portrayed the life of this man perhaps unknown to most reading Americans but to whom they are much indebted. Bowker was for 50 years the director of *Publishers' Weekly*; he was a founder of the American Library Association and the *Library Journal*. His work in the cause of international copyright is notable and his contributions to American bibliography of inestimable value. Librarians are much in Bowker's debt, and they particularly will find Dr. Fleming's book of much interest.