

We somehow know Charles Cannan better when we read that only he "knew the difference between the Oxford University Press and the Clarendon Press, and nobody dared ask him what it was" (p.54).

Not quite everything, however, is well with this book. There are a couple of anomalies about it that must be animadverted upon. First is that, although the book is presumably an exhibition catalog, that presumption is no place addressed; its unusual structure and reference system would have been more immediately comprehensible had it been made clear, probably on the title page. Second is the unaccountable omission of a number of illustrations; there are references in the text to some thirty-nine plates that were not included in the volume reviewed, although that exemplar gave no appearance of being imperfect.

These, however, are minor matters in a volume otherwise so excellent.—*David Kaser, Indiana University, Bloomington.*

*Librarians of Congress, 1802-1974.* Washington: Library of Congress, 1977. 273p. \$7.75. LC 77-608073. ISBN 0-8444-0238-9. (Available from Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.)

The first eleven administrators of our nation's foremost library are successively introduced to us in this handsome book. The esteemed historian who supplies the preface is the twelfth of that line. The series was commissioned originally for publication in the *Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, starting with the April 1975 issue, to celebrate its 175th anniversary, which coincided with our country's bicentennial year. Nine of the eleven contributors are professionally linked to LC. All evidently used its resources while preparing their assignments. Portraits, holograph letters, and other archival photographs liberally illustrate the texts, each of which is meticulously footnoted.

Six of the subjects, including the first five, devoted relatively limited portions of their careers to library work. Each man is fleshed out personally, with his full range of activities reviewed in detail. We learn much about political events that have little to do

with the library. Five studied law and one was a physician, though most turned soon to politics. Three were journalists or author-publishers, and one was a poet, while at least two others also built reputations by writing. Only one was a library school graduate, but three others brought extensive library service to their appointments. Thomas Jefferson twice gave the post (with some hesitation) to the Clerk of the House of Representatives. Not until a Congressional investigation by the Joint Committee on the Library led to the dismissal of his second appointee were the two positions divorced.

Until the Civil War the Joint Committee participated directly in such matters as development of the book collection. In those early days the library was, in spite of fires, overcrowding, and other episodes of physical neglect, a social gathering place. Frederick Marrayat called it "the best lounge at Washington" but observed that "the books are certainly not very well treated" (p.72). Three early incumbents in a row were fired, for reasons varying from fiscal negligence or, worse, to alleged secessionist sympathies. Another three nineteenth-century appointees served over thirty years each, but only two are remembered as significant figures in the library's history. Every service of over fifteen years, however productive, closed with overtones of outlived usefulness. Time marches swiftly on, even in libraries.

The final four biographies span the first three-quarters of the present century. Their tempo accelerates rapidly from such fin de siècle triumphs as moving into "the" new building, developing the LC classification system, and producing printed catalog cards. Subsequent achievements, in spite of uneven financial support, have made the Library of Congress virtually, if not in name, our national library. We follow the various leadership styles of the latter-day librarians with growing appreciation for their varied capabilities and years of fruitful work.

The research supporting these studies is for the most part competent and dependable. There are a few errors of fact, none of them substantive. John Russell Young is mistakenly identified as the only one who died in office (p.169). The article on Herbert Putnam leans heavily on previous

treatments, particularly those of David Mearns. Any team approach to writing history usually results in failures of interpretive continuity. Whatever coherence emerges is the result of generalized consensus, or is imposed from above. Subsidiary themes lack consistent development. Thus it is not easy to trace the long interplay between Joint Committee and librarian from one essay to the next. The index, consisting almost entirely of proper names, gives some help under the surprising entry "Congress (U.S.), Joint Committee. . . ." Still the book supplies human insight on the evolution of a truly great library from a tiny legislative reference collection into an institution of national and expanding international importance.—*Jeanne Osborn, University of Iowa, Iowa City.*

Thompson, Susan Otis. *American Book Design and William Morris*. New York: Bowker, 1977. 258p. \$29.95. LC 77-8783. ISBN 0-8352-0984-9.

What was the impact of William Morris as a printer and his Kelmscott Press books on American printers? This is one of the questions Susan Otis Thompson seeks to answer in this book. She also deals with two other points—delineation of the arts-and-crafts style and distinctions between this style, art nouveau, and a third style she refers to as "aesthetic."

*American Book Design and William Morris* is a carefully researched study and serves as a useful one-volume summary of Morris' influence on American printers. It primarily covers American printers and printing in the 1890s and early years of the twentieth century and seeks to categorize books of this period into the three styles mentioned above. Firms and printers touched upon include Copeland and Day, Bruce Rogers and J. M. Bowles, Daniel Berkeley Updike, Stone & Kimball, Way & Williams, Will Bradley, Frederic W. Goudy, Theodore L. DeVinne, Elbert Hubbard, Thomas Bird Mosher, and more. A final chapter provides a chronological discussion and summary.

The book under review is presumably printed by offset, but to read it comfortably under artificial light, one has to hold it at just the right angle. The volume measures

11¼-by-8¾ inches and contains 111 illustrations. No indication of original page size is given to show how much a given illustration is enlarged or reduced. Something seems amiss with the illustration on page 13. Was the title page in a verso position, opposite the opening of the text, as shown?

There are extensive notes at the end of each chapter, indicating quite a bit of delving into contemporary trade journals and other sources. At the end of the book is a list of "Design Examples," arranged alphabetically by author (292 books), and a very extensive fourteen-page list of "Textual Sources." Most of the manuscript material consulted is from the Columbia University Libraries.

In chapter V, "The Arts and Crafts Book Model," the author summarizes Morris' statements on the physical book (Appendix, p.223-29) "in categories arranged in descending order of importance, according to the amount of space given them by Morris." Under "Format" she writes: "a. Often large: folio or quarto. b. Also full range of sizes and shapes." If one applies this statement to the Kelmscott Press books, as listed by Sparling in his bibliography, one finds that of 53 titles, there are 2 folios, 1 small folio, 14 large quartos, 3 medium quartos, 7 small quartos, 20 octavos, and 6 sixteenmos. If one takes only "folio" and "large quarto" as representing books of a larger format, then only one-third of the Kelmscott books fall under the "larger format" category.

With regard to different styles, Dr. Thompson says in the Preface:

... the Arts and Crafts style itself has to be delineated very precisely to show its particular influence in what has seemed to be a mingled stream of forms. The literature of book design is surprisingly lacking in such exact descriptions of book styles in any period. While generalizations are commonly made about incunabular, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, Neo-Classical, and Romantic bookmaking, few attempts have been made to set up limits separating one style from another. The exact constituents of the Arts and Crafts style show clearly which American books belong to it and which do not.

Is there really a need for this kind of attempt to categorize books according to styles in such a precise fashion?

A few errors and omissions noted: Sir Sydney Cockerell's name is misspelled on