

TYPOGRAPHY AND ILLUSTRATION

EXAMPLES OF FINE CRAFTSMANSHIP

What is there to say about beautiful typography? Much, no doubt, that is highly technical, but it is not easy to describe the pleasure given to the eye of the ordinary reader by such a work as the Greynog Press edition of Xenophon's *CYRUPEDIA* in Philemon Holland's translation (66 fs.). It is very deliberately a sumptuous and handsome book; Baichelor hand-made paper cannot help suggesting a book that is made to be consciously and continually admired, not merely to give pleasure imperceptibly as it is read. But Holland's translation is, or has become by now, very suitable for such ceremonial treatment, which might be exasperating in a book that one would wish either to read quickly or to consult often. Long sentences and the picturesque language of the past are made the more agreeable by frequent appreciation of the gravely elegant type, the spacious and exactly proportioned margins, and the decorative disposition of the beginning and end of each chapter. Holland's marginal notes are printed in red, a good idea, for in this way by appearing altogether detached they do not affect the design of the page. The binding is of dark brown niger goatskin, the sides decorated with a Persian and perhaps too glittering pattern.

Sir Roger L'Estrange's translation of *AESOP'S FABLES* (Harrap, 49 fs.), the text from the seventh corrected edition of 1724, is another example of admirable printing, the work of the Cambridge University Press. The arrangement of the fables with their subsequent morals and reflections has evidently presented many typographical problems, and these have been ingeniously solved so that the page seldom looks too broken. The text and its arrangement has an appropriately eighteenth-century flavour. There are decorative initials and a number of engravings by Mr. Stephen Gooden, drawn with almost incredibly minute detail and with astonishing precision. This may be of no particular advantage in itself, but it is perhaps the extreme delicacy of their execution, and the necessary absence of any flourishes of style, that makes these engravings keep their place on the page so remarkably well. While using a procedure of the past Mr. Gooden has also achieved that decorum which is so seldom found in modern illustration.

Miss Lucia Joyce's alphabet of illuminated letters in *A CHALKER A B C* (Paris; The Obelisk Press, 100 fcs.), which is Chaucer's translation of Guillaume de Deguileville's *Hymn to the Holy Virgin*, is a genuinely original work. Her letters have a curiously insect-like vitality, the result perhaps of great elegance and delicacy applied to designs which have the inexplicable and disconcerting ingenuity of organic forms. As M. Louis Gillet says in his preface, which is also concerned with Chaucer and the poet whom he translated, they remind one of Irish illuminations—Miss Joyce is a daughter of Mr. James Joyce—but the most unexpected ingredients appear in them and they are in no way a pastiche. Her colour has the same mixture of extreme refinement and queer invention. Mr. Claude Flight's *CHRISTMAS AND OTHER FEASTS AND FESTIVALS* (Routledge, 5s.), which is described as "a picture commentary for grown-ups," contains forty-five coloured linoleum cuts, cheerfully satirical in feeling. These also have originality and some vitality; and Mr. Flight certainly has a gift for making a pattern, the kind of pattern that would do for a textile or a wall-paper rather than for an independent picture, out of such unlikely subjects as a Royal Academy banquet or a winkle stall.

Miss Leticia Sandford contributes a number of engravings on copper to Dr. Oesterley's new translation of *THE SONGS OF SOLOMON* (The Golden Cockerel Press, 4gns.) with an introduction and notes and the authorized version printed in parallel columns. This is evidently a work of high scholarship and at the same time of great interest to the general reader. For it appears that magnificent prose of the Authorized Version is sometimes compounded of the evasions and hesitations of a reckless translator, so that the original, accurately translated by Dr. Oesterley as

Behold, thou art fair, my friend;
Our couch is pleasant and green
—becomes in the Authorized Version—
Behold, thou art fair, my beloved,
yea, pleasant; also our bed is green.

One can almost hear the hesitation of the schoolboy getting his construe wrong, and yet the rhythm is perfect. Dr. Oesterley has also divided the *Song of Songs* into its component parts, and he explains in his preface which of these are love songs for Israelite

weddings and which may be connected with the myth of Tammuz. Miss Sandford's engravings are mainly nudes in rather frigidly rhythmical outline. The book is handsomely printed and produced.

Mr. Oliver Messel's designs for the costumes and scenery in the recent film version of the play have been used to illustrate



"Through the Woods"

ROMEO AND JULIET (Batsford, 21s.). Most of the figures are fairly exactly imitated from quattrocento paintings, usually Florentine or Veronese, and drawn with a faint elegance. As so often, one is surprised to find with how slight an indication from the designer the maker of costumes has been able to produce his dazzling confections. The designs for scenery reproduced here seem equally insubstantial.

Mr. Edmund Dulac, who has illustrated a brief account by Mr. Hugh Ross Williamson of several episodes in Greek mythology, with the title *GODS AND MORTALS IN LOVE* (Country Life, 12s. 6d.), and Mr. Arthur Rackham, who has illustrated Ibsen's *PEER GYNT* (Harrap, 15s.), are two expert and professional illustrators whose style needs no description or comment. Mr. Dulac describes his production as a book with coloured pictures rather than an illustrated book. Mr. Arthur Rackham has evidently found it easy to fit his usual style to "Peer Gynt."

There are no great number of books illustrated with wood engravings this year. Miss Agnes Miller Parker contributes seventy-three to Mr. H. E. Bates's *THROUGH THE WOODS* (Gollancz, 10s. 6d.), a characteristic work of mixed natural history and country reminiscence. Miss Parker is a remarkably patient and accurate craftsman and her drawing is extremely minute, but her contrasts of black and white seem too abrupt to be decorative and scarcely agree with her laborious treatment of surfaces. Miss Dania Nachshen's illustrations for Butler's *THE WAY OF ALL FLESH* (Cape, 10s. 6d.) are described as drawings, but they are surely wood engravings. Her work is amusingly satirical: she introduces Christina and Theobald among the demons and angels of their faith, and she is particularly good with Christina's daydreams. Mr. Powys Mathers's play about the Laotians in Indo-China, *LOVE NIGHT* (The Golden Cockerel Press, 2gns.), has wood-engravings by Mr. Buckland Wright. The Laotians have an elaborate ceremonial of love-making which it is the object of the play to suggest. It is partly in verse and partly in prose, with a simple plot. Mr. Wright is a more realistic draughtsman than many wood-engravers, but also very careful to produce a complex and detailed surface. His figure subjects, perhaps the best of which we reproduce on page 959, have a rather arbitrary chiaroscuro. Mr. Eric Gill is, of course, a most accomplished craftsman, and his wood-engravings in an allegorical story by Mr. Patrick Miller, *THE GREEN SHIP* (Golden Cockerel Press, 2gns.), have the usual mixture that we expect from him of great dexterity and tact in decoration and of extreme mannerism in the representation of every form. Mr. Miller's story of a young engineer's adventure on board an extraordinary ship is at once vivid and baffling. Without the key it is hard to understand the details of the allegory, but, as Mr. Edward Garnett points out in his foreword, some may find the episodes more pleasing in themselves than for what they symbolize.