

Briefly Noticed

William S. Peterson: *A Bibliography of the Kelmscott Press*. Oxford, The Clarendon Press; New York, Oxford University Press, 1984. 217 pp. \$39.95

This valuable and exquisitely produced work offers a complete history of the activities of the Kelmscott Press from 1891 to 1898. Consideration has been given to all aspects of the undertaking; these are ranged under the following heads: Sources, Types, Paper and Vellum, Copy Texts, Inks, Illustrations, Ornaments, Cancels, Bindings, Presses, Staff, Buildings, Publishers, Finances. Of special interest is one of Peterson's last chapters where he describes, in admirable detail, a number of works projected by the Kelmscott Press but either aborted shortly after inception or else never really begun.

Jerome J. McGann: *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. University of Chicago Press, 1984. 146 pp. \$12.50; paperback \$6.50.

In this closely argued book McGann addresses the vexed question of textual authority in the case of critical and, presumptively, definitive editions of authors commonly denominated as "classic." The gravamen of his argument is a rejection of the theory—widely held until recent times—that the author's holographs or revisions *letzter Hand* should be considered sacrosanct, hence furnish the sole legitimate basis for future editors to build on. McGann demonstrates that the concept of a single *fons et origo* for critical editions is untenable; in its stead the editor should adopt a more flexible scheme which takes full account of the labors performed by previous editors, as well as of the variables and vagaries of prior publication. Especially incisive are the way in which the author explodes the myth of "final authorial intentions" as a viable editorial tool and his description of the editing process as having in modern times become, for better or for worse, thoroughly "socialized."

My Dearest Dora: Letters from John Ruskin to Dora Livesey, Her Family and Friends. Ed. Olive Wilson. 110 pp. and 20 photographs. Available from Olive Wilson, 3 Langrigge Court, Windermere, Cumbria LA 23 3AJ. £ 5.50

At the instigation of Van Akin Burd this very arresting set of letters has finally been published, under the careful editorship of Dora Lees' granddaughter Olive Wilson. Ruskin first met Dora Lees (née Livesey) in 1860 while she was still a schoolgirl at Wintonington Hall and a close friendship quickly developed. JR cherished Dora's liveliness and intellectual curiosity, and his deep affection for her continued undiminished for over two decades. He opened himself up to this charming correspondent more than was his wont, expressing with utter frankness his fluctuating states of mind and apprising Dora of all his projects *in statu nascendi*, notably his plans for the Guild of St. George. The volume—a valuable complement to the *Wintonington Letters*—is further enriched by a number of letters to and from Fanny Colenso, by two letters from C.E. Norton to Ruskin and by some unpublished letters which Burne-Jones wrote to his friend and master and which were faithfully copied by Dora Lees. Among the illustrations the reader will find excellent photographs of Mrs. Hilliard, Constance Hilliard, Fanny Colenso and Joan Agnew; several facsimiles of Ruskin's letters; Ruskin's watercolor of the Katholische Stadtkirche Baden' a sketch for "St. Theophilus and the Angel" by Burne-Jones; a Girl's Head by the same artist and a pencil copy of Simeon Solomon's "Until the Day Break."

Latrobe's View of America, 1795-1820: Selections from the Watercolors and Sketches. Ed. Edward C. Carter II, John C. Van Horne and Charles E. Brownell. 150 b/w ill. and 41 color plates. Yale University Press. 1985. \$35.00