item, but to elevate it to an 'A' entry simply cannot be justified. But matters do not stop there. Things are made more confusing by listing in the same entry, with no further numbering, the sheet music for this show. Insofar as this very unclear entry reads, Algren apparently co-authored the lyrics. These conceivably could merit an 'A' entry, but if so, full bibliographic description of them should be given, rather than relegating them to an obscure footnote to an item that in itself does not belong in this section.

As for the balance of the text, aside from the unfortunate errors described above, the work is sound and informative. The descriptions are detailed and accurate, and the reproductions of the title pages with their collateral copyright pages, both for the U.S. and the corresponding British editions, are full-sized and clear. This is extremely helpful, both to collectors and dealers, for it eliminates any possibility of misidentifying a first edition. I know of virtually no other bibliography where so much care has been lavished on title-page reproduction. This factor alone makes the volume invaluable as a reference tool, and certainly goes a long way toward redeeming the departures from standard bibliographic practice discussed above. Lest this review sound too much like a hatchet job, may I say that these criticisms arose more from disappointment that a work that was so close to being perfect missed the opportunity when just a little more effort would have rendered it as nearly perfect as such a book can be. To sum up, it is a valuable, much-needed study that will certainly not be superceded in the foreseeable future, and is recommended to all collectors, dealers, and institutions dealing with twentieth-century literature.

ROBERT A. WILSON
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The pioneer studies of nineteenth-century publishers' bindings by Michael Sadleir and John Carter are now more than fifty years old. In recent decades there has been increasing interest in Victorian books and their covers. Pictorial surveys by Ruari McLean and Sue Allen have drawn attention to their visual appeal. Other scholars have examined such specialized subjects as designers (Pantazzi, Barber), plate dies (Ellenport), cloth patterns (Tanselle and others), and binders' tickets (Munby, Mitchell). Catalogues of the nineteenth-century fiction collections of Michael Sadleir and Robert Lee Wolff have emphasized the bibliographical importance of binding variants. The Victorian book trades have been documented in some two dozen histories and memoirs published since 1900, and the archives of several major publishing firms have been made more accessible through microfilm.

In Victorian Publishers' Bindings Douglas Ball provides a good introduction to the subject, summarizing earlier research and adding some of his own. His chapters are short and straightforward, and each is fully documented. He defines the term
publishers' binding as meaning 'book covers manufactured in quantity and intended
to be identically applied to the whole or part of an issue being bound for a publisher
to sell by wholesale or retail.' He discusses, in turn, the bookbinding trade at the
beginning of the nineteenth century; the introduction of book cloth, casing, and
gold blocking; other technological change, such as the rolling machine and the use
of steam power; Victorian aesthetics and the evolution of binding design; the
interrelationship between designer, publisher, die-cutter, and binder; and binders'
signatures and their significance.

While some of these chapters could have been longer, they demonstrate the
interest and importance of Victorian bindings for the student of the book, and they
direct the reader to further sources of information. The chapters on the roles played
by designer, publisher, and binder are particularly stimulating, and they reveal the
many problems and unknowns in this area. Who, for example, commissioned the
design? How much control did the designer have over its final
form? Why are some
designs signed and others not? Who owned the dies and to what extent were they re-
used? Was there a trade in secondhand dies as there was in wood-engraving blocks?
Publishers' archives provide some clues. Further, they reveal the reasons for binding
variants: of the 750 copies of Rambles beyond Railways printed for Bentley in 1851,
400 were bound in January, another 100 in March, and five additional batches of 50
between May and November. 'The Bentley archives show that the example quoted
is not exceptional in any way, apart from the comparatively rapid exhaustion of the
stock: many titles were bound up from an initial printing in successive batches over
a period of 10 years or so.'

Victorian Publishers' Bindings contains several useful appendices: a table of
cloth grains based on Sadleir's XIX Century Fiction, demonstrating periods and
degree of use; lists of papier mâché and relievo (moulded leather) bindings and of
cover designs by seven major designers; and an excellent list of 104 edition binders,
giving street addresses, dates, and other business information and describing in
detail the tickets or other signatures they used. Separate indexes cover subjects,
names, and titles of contemporary works cited.

Good as much of Ball's book is, one cannot help wishing that it were better -
fuller and more detailed, more even in its treatment of topics, and better organized.
Given the importance of paper bindings, particularly the yellowback, in Victorian
publishing, it is regrettable that he has limited his study to bindings in cloth and
leather. As a paragraph on yellowbacks in his discussion of illustrated covers demons-
strates, the two are not so distinct as they might appear. In the complex area of
cloth grains - essential to the bibliographer in distinguishing issues and batches
within issues - Ball compares the attempts by Carter, Sadleir, Blanck, Tanselle, and
Gaskell to systematize their description, and he adds some additional terms of his
own and seven apparently unrecorded grains. But he does not provide what he him-
self calls 'a true working field guide' or even a table linking the various terms used
by earlier bibliographers.

His treatment of designers also seems uneven. A chapter is devoted to John
Leighton, the most influential and prolific of nineteenth-century designers, but
because of the work of the late Sybille Pantazzi and a forthcoming study by
Graham G. Dry, it merely summarizes his career, and few titles are mentioned. Other designers are covered in a chapter that is part general discussion and part brief biographical notes on individuals that might have been better presented in an appendix. Further, these two chapters fall between those on 'Designer and Design' and 'Publisher and Binder,' interrupting the author's analysis of the designer-publisher-binder relationship.

A comprehensive bibliography bringing together all the author's sources would have greatly enhanced this work. Instead, the four-page general bibliography is limited to the more frequently cited titles; many more appear only in the chapter notes. Of the more than two dozen company histories cited, for example, no more than four are listed in the bibliography. The book contains only twelve full-page illustrations, all in black-and-white and placed apparently at random through the text. To appreciate the chapters on design, in particular, the reader would be advised to have a copy of McLean's *Victorian Publishers' Book-bindings in Cloth and Leather* at hand.

Despite its limitations, *Victorian Publishers' Bindings* provides a good introduction to the technical and trade aspects of its subject. Though restricted to British bindings, with occasional references to American practice, it also provides the background for any study of trade binding in nineteenth-century Canada. (What, one wonders, was the connection between Thomas Staples, who worked as a bookbinders' tool cutter in London between 1850 and 1870, and Thomas H. Staples, active in the same trade in Toronto in the 1870s?) Ball demonstrates the importance and complexity of publishers' bindings as bibliographical evidence and the need for continuing research. Once again we are reminded of how much of our publishing history is routinely destroyed by the re-binding of nineteenth-century books in our public institutions.

ELIZABETH HULSE

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In his extensive survey *The Private Press* (2d ed., 1983), Roderick Cave devotes a chapter to 'The Author as Publisher,' discussing those presses which were established to eliminate the commercial publisher, and sometimes the commercial printer as well, while achieving their purpose of 'getting material dear to the owner into print.' The Samurai Press, the subject of this recent bibliography, and, until now, a largely undocumented example of this category, was established by Cambridge undergraduates Maurice Browne and Harold Monro (who several years later was to open The Poetry Bookshop) in 1906 at Ranworth, Norfolk. The impetus and enthusiasm for the press came originally from Browne, who, having read H.G.