Unlike the custom in many countries, it has become increasingly common for British publishers to employ a designer on their own staff rather than to leave the appearance of their books in the printer's hands. There are exceptions — no publisher in his right mind would attempt to tell the Carvon, Oxford or Cambridge presses what to do; but beyond that the number of printers to whom the lay-out of a book can be entrusted is negligible (I ought to mention Messrs. R & R Clark of Edinburgh as noteworthy in this small group); but there is a large number who can do excellent work under guidance. A large number of the books which have any pretensions to good design are thus laid out in their publisher's offices, and "house styles" are therefore noticeable. The best examples of the success of this system are the publications of Messrs. Faber and Faber and Jonathan Cape, whose books have for some years been designed under the direction respectively of Mr. Richard de la Mare and Mr. Wren Howard. On the whole Messrs. Faber and Faber maintain the highest standard of production of any publisher in Great Britain. Chas & Windus is another firm whose books can always be picked out without looking at the imprint and in this case it is interesting to note that while Mr. Ian Parsons, their designer, has been in the R.A.F. his able assistant Mrs. Smallwood has carried on the "house style" to such effect that there is no appreciable difference between the productions for which each of them has been responsible.

At present it appears that the war has finally killed off the private presses, which the exception of the most important of them, the Golden Cockerel. Here Mr. Christopher Sandford, as printer-designer-publisher, has stayed in business throughout the war, though his activities have