The Introduction of Latin Types.

In his third lecture on books, at the Brussels School of Typography, M. Jean Dumont says that a complete revolution was made in the art of printing when Jenson brought the Latin types into use. His first essays were evidently not very successful, as he seems to have returned to the gothics perfected by Wendelin de Spira and Bernard de Cologne. Before Jenson, there were many who had used roman capitals, and amongst them was Pannartz, who had established a printing office in the convent of Subiaco, and many of his works are to be found in Italy. Zaroth, of Milan, improved the type brought into use by Jenson, and was the first to issue the small size for sale. It was afterwards used by Aldus, from whose office at Venice issued some good work between the years 1494 and 1515.

The style of type he used was something like that which we now call "Elzevir," from the name of the celebrated Dutch printer of the 17th century who popularized it.

Before noting other fonts brought into use by Aldus, his invention of the italic character claims notice. At first this character bore the name of "aldin," and while in France it was known as "italique," in Germany, Italy, and Holland it was named "cursif," or "cursive."

It appears that the idea of founding type of this character was suggested to Aldus by the sight of a manuscript of Petrarch's, for at the end of his edition of Petrarch he says, "The writing of Petrarch is so perfect that the engraver employed to copy the design had merely to follow it stroke by stroke." So that, by force of circumstances, Petrarch became the draughtsman, Aldus conceived the practicality of the development, and François of Bologna made the types.

Aldus obtained the sole right to use his types in Italy, and in 1505 published a "Virgil" in the new type. About this time printing made rapid progress in Italy, whilst in France the progressive features were almost entirely absent. A celebrated engraver, Garamond, perfected the roman characters to such a degree that he deserted the gothics for his new style, and from this time the gothic began to lose ground in popularity. Garamond is also noted as the engraver of the first Greek points, first made use of by Robert Estienne in 1544.

After being honoured by Thierry Martens establishing a press in 1473, Belgium was chosen as the home of an obscure French workman, Christopher Plantin, who soon became first among the printers established there. The origin of the famous Plantin printing press was somewhat singular. On his first appearance in Belgium he was too poor to afford a workshop and opened a shop where he sold books and his wife superintended a small drapery business. One night he was attacked and seriously ill-treated by a band of masked men, who, on his afterwards obtaining information as to their identity, presented him with a large sum of money to preserve secrecy, as it appeared he had been attacked by mistake. This recompense enabled him to establish a printing office. The first book bearing his name was printed in 1555. It is a small treatise in 8vo, entitled, "L'Institution d'une fille de bonne maison," and was a sign that the typographic art had entered upon a new era.

M. Max Rooses, in his work on Plantin and his printing, says, "Compare the types employed by Plantin with those of his rivals (Paul-Aludus Manuce and the more celebrated one of Estienne); his italic types are graceful, his roman characters are exceedingly regular, the faces are well opened, of neat design, and easy for the reader to grasp at sight. These last are on a par with, if they do not even surpass, those of Estienne, and as for the italics, they are less uneven and less angular than those of Aldus."

The Greek types as used by Plantin may be placed on an equality with those of the Estienne. "If there is one thing more than another which deserves praise," says M. Degeorge, in his book, "La Maison Plantin," "it is the perfect regularity of the spacing between words and lines." Finally—and it is this that evidences the high professional abilities of Plantin—the greater part of the Plantin editions testify to a large amount of taste in the placing of titles and the judicious employment of ornament, along with the minor details which agreeably catch the eye before the mind has had time to fix upon it.

In 1562, Plantin issued his first dictionary. The Latin is in roman type, the French in italics, and the Flemish in gothic type.

The "Missale Romanum," published in 1572, is a masterpiece of its class; it is printed in red and black and includes church music. M. Reuens says that this missal was the prototype of the admirable missals that the establishment of Plantin furnished for almost three centuries, and which modern typography has not as yet surpassed in beauty and perfection.

In our opinion, that is a good deal to say, for various houses—for instance, the house of Deceel—Lefèvre, of Tournai—produced missals which were veritable masterpieces in composition, engraving, and printing.

In 1572, Plantin published the famous polyglot Bible, the event of the time, and which established the fame of its printer. This Bible forms eight volumes in folio, and is printed in five languages. Five volumes are printed in Greek, Latin, Chaldean, and Hebrew, and three volumes in Syriac. Forty workmen were employed on the polyglot Bible during the space of four years, and the work cost £5000 to produce. In fact, it was the most difficult of achievement of any work up to the sixteenth century, both for arrangement and correctness. Twelve hundred copies of this famous Bible were printed: twelve on parchment paper, ten on imperial large paper, 200 on royal paper made at
Lyons, and 960 on royal made at Troyes. The cost of the Lyons paper edition was £10 per copy, and that of Troyes £8 15s. per copy.

"Now that the Bible is completed," wrote Plantin to Cajas, the secretary to Philip II, "I am so relieved at its completion, that I would not venture to recommence the work even though I were guaranteed £1500 and presented with twice that amount, and even though all the types and forms are ready."

In 1574, the first edition of the Flemish dictionary was issued—the one by Kilian, which is yet, it appears, a good guide to the study of the language of the Netherlands. In 1573, says M. Max Rooses, Plantin received his papers of nationalisation. When we state that Plantin fixed proofs of his work to the doors of his building and offered rewards to any who could discover errors in the composition, we see that he brought the most careful study to bear upon his work. He was splendidly seconded in these efforts to obtain perfection by Corneille Kilian, his reader, and by Juste Lipse, who revised the proofs.

There is a somewhat curious remark of Kilian's to be found in the tome VII. of the "Theatrum vitae Humanae" of Laurent Beyerlinch anent his duties: "Our business is to correct the errors occurring in books, and alter defective passages to their full meaning; but a thoroughly bad piece of copy on which fault after fault has accumulated, and in which the true sense has been destroyed by carelessness, is very apt to be so altered as to dissatisfy its writer. The printer cannot afford the time for alterations and the work is printed, whereupon some critic pounces upon an error for which the corrector is blamed and the typographer is censured, when the real cause of complaint is on other shoulders. When one is so ill-advised as to attempt to correct the faults of others, he is sure to draw dissatisfaction upon himself,—never thanks." Present day correctors will emphasize the same idea.

Kilian died at Anvers in 1607, at the age of 79, having spent almost half a century in the service of Plantin.

Perhaps the most interesting of the Plantin records is the journal of the house, containing entries of stock and of receipts and expenditure, and dating from 1536 to 1865, i.e., three centuries, giving a splendid record of long and useful work, and proving that the number of works printed at the Plantin office must have been very considerable. In 1570, in consideration of his services to the art he represented, Plantin was raised to the dignity of typographer-in-chief to Philip II.

His death occurred at Anvers on July 1st, 1589.

With the year 1626 commenced a brilliant epoch in the history of Elzevier. Louis Elzevier was a native of Louvain and followed the business of bookbinding. In 1580 he established a business in bookselling and bookbinding, but there is nothing in his work to distinguish it above contemporary productions, and the honour of making the name of Elzevier famous devolved
on his son Bonaventure and his grandson Abraham, who at once set up a high standard of production. According to M. Willems, the aim of producing perfect work according to the standard of the time was not attained until after nine years of unceasing perseverance. The Cesar, the Pliny, and the Terence of 1633 show the high-water mark of their success. These form the climax of a series of classics, commencing with Horace and Ovid.

In 1641 appeared the "Cid" and a reproduction of pieces more in vogue, followed in 1642 with "Regnier," the principal record of French literature. Some of the best publications in large size are "L'Academie de l'Espe" of G. Thibaut, the "Lexicon" of Scapula and Golius, and the "Saint Augustin" of 1675. After the latter date the high standard of the office declined rapidly under the hands of Abraham Elzevir, who was a councillor of Leyde, and appears to have been more interested in municipal matters than in the furtherance of printing.

The name of the artist who engraved the types used by Elzevier has been frequently a subject of discussion and enquiry, and the honour has been attributed to such well-known engravers as Claude Garamond and the two Sanlacque. M. Willems has obtained a document which gives specimens of the types in use on the sale of the material of Daniel Elzevier in 1681, with the mention of a certain Van Dijck, of Holland, "Proeven van Letteren die gesneden zijn door wijlen Cristoffel Van Dijck." M. Willems says it was to excuse those who destroyed the types and matrices of Van Dijck, on the assumption that they were ignorant of the fact that he was the inventor of the type which had so glorified the name of Elzevier.

After the Elzevier period followed a time of typographical mediocrity, and nothing of particular value was issued from 1675 to 1737, when the invention of Simon Furnier came into notice, which question will form the subject of the fourth lecture. — Translated from Les Archives de l'Imprimerie.

A Perfect Binding.

A true book lover requires a binding perfect in material execution and decorated in perfect taste, so that the purity of the lines, the graceful choice and distribution of the ornaments may reveal in the gilder talent as a draughtsman and sureness of hand as an artisan. Others, still more delicate, delight in the Jansenist binding, where no gilding distracts the eye, displaying the perfect skill of the binder as white, unadorned porcelain displays the masterly skill of the potter. Others, again, reserve their decoration for the morocco lining of the side covers.

Another school of bibliophiles, the Romanticists, resuscitating the usages of the middle ages, call in the aid of workers in metal and ivory, but nowadays such bindings are obviously anachronisms or admissible at the utmost for prayer books, marriage gifts, or books of devotion given as presents. Finally, there are the amateurs of mosaic bindings and the "fantaisistes," who seek new effects or new combinations of old processes, and indulge in book covers made of scraps of brocade, embroidery, Venice velvet, serpent skin, Japanese leather paper, and what not.

How to Prevent Library Fines.

It has always appeared to me that we should have some way of letting a reader know when his book will be due at the library. Putting both dates on his call-card does not seem to fill the bill, as this card is likely to be put in a pocket where it will not be seen until an "Overdue" notice is received. The thought of a book-mark came to me, and I had some made, paying for them by putting some advertising on the back. I enclose a sample, shewing the two sides. I think publishers will be found ready to supply them, making the face to order. We have a double dater, which is to be used for dating the daily charging slips. We use the same for the book-mark, dating up a supply in the morning and always keeping them on the delivery desk where readers can take one when a book is received. They have come to be a necessity with us.

—S. H. BERRY IN Library Journal.

BOOK-MARK.

Take one with every book charged, and avoid having overdue fines to pay.

Notice.

A Book drawn on the First of the dates below will be due on the Second date.

25 Ap
9 My

"Next to a good college, a good library may well be chosen as a means of education; indeed, a book is a voiceless teacher, and a great library is a virtual university."—MATHIVES.

"He that walketh with wise men is wise."—Prov. xii. 20.