

## 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 we now call "elzevir," from the name of the celebrated Dutch printer of the 17th century who popularised it.

Before noting other founts 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 "cursiv."

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 practicability of the development, and François of Bologne 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 Mærtens 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-Aldus 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. Reulens 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 Desclée-Lefèvre, of Tournai—produced missals which were veritable masterpieces in composition, engraving, and printing.

In 1573, 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 vitæ Humanæ" 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 1566 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



MEMORIAL TO BALTHASAR MORETUS.

PLANTIN MUSEUM, ANTWERP.

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

