

The Benedictines and Printing at Subiaco.

A REVIEW BY "CRUX."

Finally I have reached the third and possibly the most important section of Dr. Croke's instructive work. The readers will kindly keep in mind the trend of the argument concerning Architecture and Printing at Subiaco. Having already proven that the Benedictine Monks, of Subiaco, in Italy—especially under Abbots Humbert and John V.—were the introducers of the Gothic style, and of Church frescoing, into Italy, it now becomes necessary to show that they also were the pioneers of Printing in the same country. Before turning to the text, under consideration, it may be well to state that before the year 1500, ninety Italian cities possessed printing-presses. Printing reached France in 1470, Switzerland in the same year, Hungary and the Low countries in 1473, Spain in 1474, Bohemia in 1476, England in 1477, and Poland in 1500.

Beginning the section of his work on Printing, Dr. Croke says:—

"With the introduction of Printing, the continuity of progress striven for, and attained to, at Subiaco touches not only its apex but also its logically full and rightful completion. With the introduction of this, the most efficient of all media for culture, the

great monastic work of organization though not of furtherance ended."

The Abbey of Subiaco is universally admitted, by every authority, to have been the first home of Printing in Italy. "To recognize this is to recognize that it contributed in a quite incalculable way to promote the revival of learning in Italy, whence that revival was communicated to the rest of Europe. It is evident that the employment of Printing at Subiaco was not a mere matter of chance, but was one act of a long series of acts arising out of conditions of the great monastery supplying itself with the requisites to realize the Benedictine ideal of study and prayer; the duties entailed by the "Alumato" and the "Opus Dei." To show this is to show that the things done at Subiaco between 1052 and 1465, were not the effects of chance. Dr. Croke here quotes from Hume, who says:—

"Nothing requires greater nicety, in our enquiries concerning human affairs, than to distinguish exactly what is owing to chance, and what proceeds from causes..... The distinguishing between chance and causes must depend upon every particular man's sagacity, in considering every

particular incident. But, if I were to assign any general rule to help us in applying this distinction, it would be the following. What depends upon a few persons is, in great measure, to be ascribed to chance, or secret and unknown causes; What arises from a great number, may often be accounted for by determined and known causes."

And the author adds:—

"The evolutionary misis of Subiaco during the centuries we are considering was that of a community."

Don Leone Alodi, O.S.B., in his preface to the chronicle, previously referred to in this review, denied that the German printers Arnold Pannartz and Conrad Schweinheime, worked at Subiaco. His intimate knowledge of the Archives of Subiaco is such that his mere assertion carries a negative weight with it, while he positively states this:—

"Who, then, he writes, were the printers of Subiaco? Consider, please, that the monks of the fifteenth century, almost all of them ordained as priests, had, in addition to their monastic duties, the obligations of the priesthood. These, absorbing a great part of their time, would have left them only as much as sufficed for the

important duty of transcribing manuscripts. The monks who then filled the monastery of Subiaco, being for the greater part Germans and natives of the very city of Mainz, it may easily have happened that one of their number was informed of the new manner of reproducing manuscripts. Considering these facts, we make reply with a question: Would it be extravagant and absurd to say that in the monastery of Subiaco the monks made the last and supreme effort to lighten and shorten their burdensome duty of transcribing manuscripts?"

Commenting hereon Dr. Croke says:—

"Whether the arguments used by the Archivist of Santa Scolastica, which are pertinent as telling against the current version, find general acceptance is an irrelevant matter. But they avail to show how deep a meaning belongs to this portion of our thesis. That the introduction of Printing at Subiaco arose out of the duty of copying manuscripts for ecclesiastical needs and for purposes of study is clear. That the monks were originators only in a moral, or in a material way also, is a question which does not affect our thesis of their merits towards culture. The traditional ex-

onomy of monastic houses created the need which their progressive spirit satisfied."

Thus was it with Architecture, Painting and Printing at Subiaco. It was hardly owing to a mere chance that Printing was introduced into England from the Abbey of Westminster, and into Italy from that of Subiaco, or that the monks of Ottobrun, Bamberg, Augsburg, St. Albans, Tavistock, and Montserrat were also among the first to adopt and propagate the new art. Says Dr. Croke:—

"This zeal, whether it was that of workers, sympathizers or participants, redounds to the honor of the institute which devoted care and incurred exorbitant expense, first in regard to the introduction of the Pictured Architecture into Italy, next in regard to the plentiful use of the pictorial art before and during its renaissance and, lastly, in regard to the newly found art of Printing."

In concluding his work he makes this statement:—

"That one Abbey should have merited so excellently of all three arts; that, in periods and circumstances so diverse, it should have displayed such equal appreciation and enterprise in their use, establishes the thesis that

the record of its activity constitutes a real chapter in the history of progress in general and of culture in particular; a threefold and continuous chapter, embodying the synthetic and closely allied records of a movement towards a higher and yet varied level, and such as to present not less a uniform than a unique tribute to the cloistered helpers of culture, and, in its universal importance, a rich page to the history of human endeavor."

Here my self-imposed task ends. I have seriously attempted to review a work, the erudition of which is obvious, and the logical conclusions of which are so highly important to the grand cause of Catholicity. The Church, which has been accused of teaching ignorance and combating science and culture, has through various bodies, that constitute the Benedictine community, antedated by 150 years, in Architecture, and by two centuries in Painting, the acknowledged introducers of both arts; and in Printing the monks of Subiaco were five years ahead of France and Switzerland, eight years ahead of Hungary and the Netherlands, nine years ahead of Spain, eleven years ahead of Bohemia, twelve years ahead of England, and fifteen years ahead of Poland.

RUTHVEN IN ENGLAND.

The anti-Catholic lecturer Ruthven has been attacking the Catholic Church and her priests and nuns, in the Assembly Hall, Fawcett-street, Sunderland, Eng., on two consecutive Sunday afternoons. Of his visits Mr. P. McCue writes: I am of opinion that he is not likely to visit this town again. Apparently he took precautions against arousing the Catholics, or, as it seems, he tried to steal a march if possible, for his advent was not made known until two days before the time of his first Sunday's "sermon lectures." A few Catholics, including the writer, members of St. Benet's Church, The Causeway, Monkwearmouth, were on the alert and procured 1,000 leaflets of "The History of Ex-Priest Ruthven" from the Catholic Truth Society, at very short notice. (The letter containing the order left Sunderland at 5 p.m., on Friday, and the leaflets arrived on Sunday morning by letter post.) The leaflets were nearly all given away to the people who attended Ruthven's lectures, on leaving the Hall, and caused a good many who read them missgivings as to the wisdom of how their time and money was spent in listening to a man who was described in the leaflets as a drunkard, a wife-beater, a convicted swindler, and as having been expelled from the ranks of the Presbyterian Ministry in Australia. What lent additional force to the leaflets was the fact that the matter they contained was written and attested by Presbyterians in America.

For the second Sunday's "sermon lectures" by (this time) "Father Ruthven" there were provided 1,500 leaflets, of the "History of the Ex-Priest Ruthven" and 1,500 leaflets on the Confessional. The leaflets were distributed, as previously, to all the people on leaving the hall. During the first Sunday's lectures Ruthven invited any Catholic—a priest preferred—to discuss with him, and some members of the Protestant Alliance made capital out of this on leaving the meeting, because no Catholic responded. It should be mentioned that the four churches in the town advised their flocks to keep away from Ruthven's meetings. The writer, who was helping to deliver the leaflets, thought that some good might be done by interrogating the lecturer as to some of the allegations the leaflets contained against his character, and with this object in view was I present at the concluding portion of the last lecture. The lecture (the part I heard) was a nauseous series of charges of immorality against Catholics in general on account of the way they are corrupted in the confessional, but special reference was made to the number of illegitimate children in France, Italy and Austria, which, according to the lecturer, exceeded the number born through marriage. It was difficult to listen to the lecturer's calumnies in silence and I several times stigmatised the assertions as lies. At the conclusion of the lecture I advanced towards the platform but was not allowed upon it by the chairman. Perhaps the chairman (who had but one leg) was afraid I

might be inclined to emulate a man who got on the platform in the afternoon, and at whom Ruthven presented a revolver. However, I stood in front of the platform and faced the audience.

I began by saying that I was surprised that Ruthven did not tell the audience something about the illegitimacy in Catholic Ireland as compared with Protestant England and Scotland. Ruthven replied that he admitted in the early part of his lecture that there were less illegitimate children in Ireland, comparatively than in England or Scotland; "but," said Ruthven, "what is the cause of it?" According to Mgr. Nugent, public opinion is so strong in Ireland against illegitimacy that girls when unfortunate, are forced into exile in England or Scotland to help to swell the rate of illegitimacy in these countries." I asked, if that was so, why public opinion was so strong in Ireland and not in England. No answer. I then proceeded to give the opinions of James Anthony Froude, Lord O'Connell, Brown, and various other Protestants, that it was owing to the influence of the priests and the confessional that female virtue was so pure in Ireland. These statements did not suit the audience, who said: "Ask questions, we don't want a speech." The clamor was so great that I could not proceed. I then asked the following questions: First question—"Is it not a fact, Mr. Ruthven, that you were expelled from the Presbyterian Ministry in Australia for drunkenness and cruelty to your wife?" Answer—"As a Catholic priest I should have been expelled all my life." Second question—"Is it not a fact, Mr. Ruthven, that you never were a Catholic priest, and that you were expelled from a Catholic school in Dublin for drunkenness and bad behavior?" Answer—"I will give £50 to anyone that will name the school from which I was expelled." "If that is your answer, Mr. Ruthven, the leaflet I hold in my hand will test it. This leaflet published by the Catholic Truth Society, states that you were expelled from a school in Dublin for drunkenness for twelve months in Erie the publishers up for libel if you dare. Take me up for libel." No answer. Third question—"Is it not a fact, Mr. Ruthven, that you were imprisoned for twelve months in Erie County Penitentiary, in America, for obtaining money under false pretences for charitable purposes?" No answer, although the question was repeated three times. "We will close the meeting with prayer, as we began it," ejaculated Ruthven at last. "Gentlemen," I said, "this man is a fraud and an impostor. Twenty Presbyterian Ministers say so. Here is his history: Here are their names and addresses."

I held up the leaflets, several people from amongst the audience held out their hands for the leaflets, and another man and myself handed them out from bundles in all directions; and as the audience left the hall those who did not get the leaflets inside eagerly took them from the men we had posted outside the doors. After

the meeting Ruthven had to be escorted to the railway station by policemen and members of the Protestant Alliance. The chairman, Mr. Watson Sheraton, began a discussion in the Sunderland Daily Echo complaining in offensive language of the want of toleration of Catholics, and suggested that in future policemen should be stationed near at hand to protect such lecturers.—We should add that in the controversy with Mr. Sheraton Mr. McCue showed that he can write forcibly as well as speak with good effect. Mr. Sheraton was anxious to drag the local clergy into a public

dispute with Ruthven, but Father Gilroy and Father T. I. Smith, in a letter to Mr. McCue, stated that they failed to see what useful purpose could be served by such a discussion. They "had no wish to enter the lists with every four-mouthed slanderer or pretended priest who, without sufficient introduction, with dubious antecedents, and with no credentials, might be brought from the ends of the earth to pour forth his venom upon the ancient and venerable Church to which Mr. McCue and they belonged.—Liverpool Catholic Times.

Notes of Irish News.

FROM OUR EXCHANGES.

A SILVER JUBILEE.—On Wednesday, 21st June, Very Rev. Canon McKeene, the Parish priest of Magherafelt, celebrated the silver jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood. The happy occasion was taken advantage of by the people of the parish to express their love and esteem for their pastor, and their appreciation of the numerous undertakings so beneficial to the parish which the very reverend gentleman has carried out so successfully since he took charge of the mission in succession to the late Canon Donnelly.

PARNELL MOVEMENT.—At the meeting of the Parnell Anniversary Committee, recently, the following resolution was passed on the motion of Mr. John E. Redmond, M.P.:—

"That in our opinion the time has come when a monument commemorative of his great public service should be erected in Dublin to the late Chas. Stewart Parnell, and that the foundation stone should be laid on the anniversary of his death next October; that steps be at once taken to obtain signatures to a requisition to the Lord Mayor asking him to summon a meeting of citizens to consider the suggestion."

FINANCIAL RELATIONS.—A meeting of the All-Ireland Committee was held at the Mansion House last week, to consider the report of the Committee from the inception of the movement. Mr. R. Keating Clay, J.P., Chairman Dalkey U.D.C., presided. The following members were also present:—

Mr. T. A. Joynt, T.C.; Mr. J. N. Maw Coghlan Briscoe, P.L.C.; Mr. E. Greer, B.L.; Mr. T. A. Kelly, Mr. W. O'Reilly, D. L., (Louth); Mr. T. C. Drury, B. L.; Mr. J. A. Macnechy, J. P., (delegate from Co. Longford); Mr. P. J. Usher, Mr. R. J. Kelly, B. L. (Galway), Mr. Wm. Field, M.P.; Mr. A. Keough Nolan, secretary, etc. The draft report having been read by the secretary, was approved and directed to be printed.

A souvenir of the Centenary celebrations in honor of St. Columba, which a couple of years ago claimed and received the respectful and sympathetic attention of the Celtic world, including even the non-Catholic Celts, has just come to hand says the Dublin Nation. The souvenir takes the form of a volume entitled "Derry, Colum-

kill," and the author to whom we are indebted for a work which will be prized by students of history, of oecology, and of archaeology, is the Rev. Wm. Doherty, C.C., of Perry.

RAINFALL PERIODS.—After a drought of twenty-three days' duration some rain fell on Saturday night. According to a register kept at Fassaroo, near Bray, by Mr. R. M. Barrington, such a long spell without a drop of rain is most exceptional, and has only happened twice since 1852. The dry summer of 1887 had an absolute drought of 30 days, from June 7th to July 7th. Rainless periods are perhaps most prolonged in May and June but whenever they occur, our climate is so uncertain, they afford us little or no clue as to weather of the future.

A DISCOVERY AT THURLES.—On Monday, while a laborer named Patrick Birmingham was making some excavations in a garden at Thurles, he discovered a number of ancient coins about six feet from the surface. The coins are in a good state of preservation. Some of them bear date 1791. Some months ago the same man discovered a few pieces of coin some yards from where he made the present find and equally deeply embedded.

IRISH DEATH-RATE.—The following are the mortality statistics in the principal Irish towns for the week ending June 24:—Armagh, 28.5; Ballymena, 16.9; Belfast, 18.0; Carrickfergus, 17.5; Clonmel, 19.5; Cork, 23.5; Drogheda, 3.8; Dublin, 20.7; Dundalk, 00.0; Galway, 11.3; Kilkenny, 42.5; Limerick, 16.8; Lisburn, 25; 7; Londonderry, 23.6; Lurgan, 31.9; Newry, 16.1; Newtownards, 11.3; Portadown, 21.7; Queenstown, 11.5; Sligo, 35.5; Tralee, 22.4; Waterford, 15.9; Wexford, 13.5.

The death of the Rev. Father McKeon, of Killoe, county Longford, is announced. Father McKeon, had been for a considerable time in failing health. In many portions of the diocese of Ardagh where the deceased ministered his name was a household word.

WOLFE TONE.—Ten thousand Irishmen and women rendered honor recently to the memory of the great Irishman whose ashes rest in Bodens-town churchyard.

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LETTER FROM ROME

Rome, June 25th, 1899.

The public Consistory took place last Thursday. It gave eleven new princes to the Catholic Hierarchy, and afforded to several thousand people an opportunity to see His Holiness. From early morning until ten o'clock a. m., the people who were fortunate enough to possess a ticket of admission came flocking into the Vatican. At the very door of the Royal Staircase the Papal Flag was floating and the Papal Guards in full line were lined along the corridors leading to the Consistory Hall. Once the visitor reached the halls through which the Papal procession would pass, he found himself in a large passage walled up on either side with stalwart Swiss Guards and Papal soldiers. As the Consistory Hall cannot contain all who desire to assist at those great ceremonies, tickets to see the Pope going to the Hall were issued, and the holders of them were allowed to stand behind those soldiers.

The hall now used for the Consistory was formerly the place where the Popes received foreign princes and is called the Ducal Hall. It is very oblong, beautifully decorated by Bernini and other sculptors, and contains sixteen Tribunals ranged along the walls. On Thursday last the passage of the Papal Court was fenced in with a very solid partition about three feet high. On either side of this passage the audience was placed, the ladies going to the right side of the Throne, and the gentlemen to the left. Whilst awaiting the entry of his Holiness, it was interesting to note the distinguished persons who were escorted to their seats of honor. First came a large number of Archbishops and Bishops in their beautiful robes, who gracefully acknowledged the military salute made to them as they passed through a double line of Papal Soldiers. Foreign Ambassadors to the Holy See, in all the insignia of their dignity, presented a very pleasing sight. No less magnificent was the appearance of the nobility and of the relatives of the new Cardinals. In the meantime, the Sistine Chapel choir were gliding through the throng and all eyes went in search of Don Perosi. The modest little priest, however, contrived to pass through unnoticed, but once he appeared on his stand as conductor, he became and remained the centre of attraction until a strong outburst of applause in the outer halls, heralded the coming of Leo.

A cordon of Swiss Guards headed the procession. Behind them came members of the Pope's household, and then the Cardinals with their attendants. As soon as His Holiness reached the entrance the applause burst forth. Ladies waved their handkerchiefs and long and loud "Long live Leo," "Long live the Pope—King," resounded throughout the hall. His Holiness was carried in his portable chair high above all heads. As he advanced to the passage he would bend down towards the people and bless them continually. Leo wore his richest tiara and a red cope. When the Chair reached the far-end of the hall, His Holiness left it and walked very quickly up the steps of the Papal Throne. As soon as the portable chair was lowered

ed to the ground, the applause ceased and the choir, which had been singing during the entire procession, was heard.

The Cardinals then came forward and made an act of obedience before the Pope. A large escort of Papal Guards accompanied the twenty-two Cardinals who left the Consistory Hall in order to introduce the new Cardinals. In a few minutes the eleven candidates appeared, every one of them being assisted by two Cardinals. The grandeur of this procession together with the magnificence that surrounded the Papal Throne, and the singing of the Sistine choir under Perosi's direction produced impressions that baffle description. The new Cardinals made their reverence to His Holiness, kissed his toe and hand, and received from him the kiss of peace. They then withdrew to the right of the Throne, and received the congratulations of the Cardinals. Finally, returning to the feet of His Holiness, every new Cardinal received the red hat, and returning to their places at the left side of the Throne took their rank as Princes in the Church of God. Immediately the Tiara was lifted from His Holiness' head, who, standing erect, gave the Papal Blessing with a strong and musical voice. Leo then descended from the Throne and stepped into his carriage-chair. This move was the signal for deafening applause, applause which increased more and more as His Holiness neared the exit of the hall. With the disappearance of His Holiness, this applause subsided, but its echo was continued by the vast throng outside who had been patiently waiting for Leo's return.

The Papal Court repaired to the Pauline Chapel, where a Solemn Te Deum was sung in thanks-giving for the creation of the new Cardinals. In a private Consistory held immediately afterwards, many episcopal nominations were published. Among the many Prelates named were Archbishop O'Connor, Toronto, Archbishop Christie, Oregon, U. S., Bishop Coutier, Three Rivers, and Bishop Gaffney, Meath, Ireland. After those nominations several Archbishops asked for the Pallium. Rev. Father Leclair, Canadian College, obtained the Pallium for His Grace Archbishop O'Connor. About the middle of July it will arrive in Toronto, in care of a young member of his Grace's clergy.

These great ceremonies cannot efface the souvenir of the honor which the Romans paid to the Angelic youth, St. Aloysius on his feast, June 21. The first Vespers were grand. On the feast day itself five Cardinals and a large number of prelates and priests offered up the Holy Sacrifice at the altar where the Saint's body lies and in the room where he lived. The second Vespers were sung by three choirs under the baton of the great musician and Jesuit, Dr. Angelis. The rich and poor flock to this feast, and vie with each other in doing honor to the saintly memory of Aloysius. For, if Aloysius was born among the noble and rich, he lived his later years, contracted his fatal disease and expired among the poor and humble.—F.D.H.