

II.

NOTES ON SOME CONTINENTAL MUSEUMS IN FRANCE, GERMANY,
AND BELGIUM. BY JOSEPH ANDERSON, LL.D., *Assistant Secretary.*

In compliance with the suggestion of the Council, I visited a number of the Museums on the Continent in the month of August last. I had the good fortune to be accompanied by my friend Mr J. Russell Walker, architect, and as his special line of investigation drew us to the churches and mine to the museums, we managed to see most of the ecclesiastical as well as of the general antiquities and collections that lay within reach of our route. In the course of our journey we visited the following towns:—Amiens, Rouen, Paris, including St Germain and St Denis, Strasburg, Carlsruhe, Heidelberg, Worms, Mayence, Weisbaden, Frankfurt, Coblenz, Limburg, Bonn, Cologne, Aix-la-Chapelle, Liege, Namur, Brussels, Antwerp, Mechlin, Ghent, and Bruges, returning by Ostend. In most of these there are museums or public collections of greater or less extent, all of which possess some points of archæological interest, but the smaller collections for the most part only repeat sectional features of the larger national and provincial museums, and to them alone I shall direct attention at present. It would be impossible by any amount of condensed description to present an adequate idea of their contents, and I shall therefore confine my remarks to a brief notice of the principal collections from the point of view of Museumism rather than Archæology.

The three National Museums visited were those of France at St Germain, of Central Germany at Mayence, and of Belgium at Brussels. Of these, that at St Germain is by far the most remarkable for the magnitude of its collections, the completeness of its organisation, and the lucidity and methodicality of its arrangement. The building, an enormous quadrangular structure, retaining externally its ancient aspect as a great mediæval chateau, has been adapted internally to its modern purpose. These adaptations have been made throughout with special regard to the requirements of that purpose, and no question of their expense appears to have been considered as a reason for not fulfilling

these requirements. The rooms and corridors are spacious, lofty, and well lighted. The larger and heavier objects, such as stone monuments and other articles of more than ordinary size and weight, are appropriately arranged in the rooms and corridors on the basement floor, the smaller and lighter articles being classified according to their chronological relations in the rooms on the upper floors, where they are either displayed in wall cases on the sides of the room, or in table cases placed on the floor space, with free access on all sides. The wall cases are not carried greatly above the level of the eye, and the table cases are light in construction, and excellently adapted for the display of their contents. When the objects which they contain are small, such as the smaller varieties of flint implements, the table is covered with a rectangular casing of no great depth, the frame apparently of galvanised iron, with flat glass top and sides. The bottom of the case is covered with paper of a neutral tint, usually a shade of grey or brown. But the objects are not laid on the paper; they stand clear off the neutral background, each article being supported separately by an ingeniously constructed crutch of twisted brass wire inserted beneath it, and which is thus itself invisible. This peculiarly French and finical method is also extended to the tickets which are placed alongside the specimens. In an establishment in which time and expense are of no moment in comparison with the scientific efficiency of the collection, this is certainly the *ne plus ultra* of the art of displaying specimens. In the table cases in which larger objects, such as collections of stone and bronze celts, bronze ornaments, and vessels of pottery are displayed, different methods are adopted. Sometimes the interior of the case is arranged as a series of steps or platforms, rising from all sides to the centre. Sometimes the table is covered by a more lofty rectangular casing of glass, which is divided down the centre by an opaque partition, from which tiers of shelving slope slightly to the front on either side. Sometimes the shelving is of glass supported on brass rods, and stretching horizontally across the case in successive floors, on which the objects are placed. This method is most suitable for such articles as small vessels of pottery, which are light in proportion to their bulk.

This vast collection, which is intended to illustrate the history of

culture, and the progress of civilisation in France from the earliest period to the time of Charlemagne, is at present arranged in twenty-two rooms—many of them spacious halls—and to provide for its future expansion an equal amount of space is available in the other two sides of the quadrangle, which are still in the hands of the architect. The museum is open to the public unrestrictedly on three days of the week from half-past eleven till four; two days are reserved for students, and one day weekly for museum work. Although it has been open to the public since 1867, the collection is still unprovided with a printed catalogue for the use of visitors; but owing to its admirable arrangement and the general use of descriptive labels, this want is the less felt. But, in point of fact, it is significant of the thoroughness of the Scottish idea of a museum that ours is still the only national collection of its kind that has attempted to supply its visitors with a detailed catalogue, by means of which they are enabled to ascertain for themselves the nature, the history, and the assignable place in the classified series of every object exhibited.

In its nature and characteristics the collection at St Germain's differs widely from ours. It is more strictly limited in range, as it contains nothing that is assignable to a later date than the eighth century. It does not even at present completely illustrate the culture of the Frankish and Carlovingian periods, and it has nothing as yet that is worthy of the name of an early Christian collection, for which there is such a magnificent field in France. But it presents an extraordinary development of the two ends of the consecutive series which it represents, a series ranging from the epoch of the drift to the close of the Gallo-Roman period. The "palæolithic" section exhibits a development which is nowhere else to be found, and the rooms devoted to the drift and cave collections are the special features of the museum. The collections from the dolmens or sepulchral cairns of the later Stone Age are less extensive, but they are presented with a peculiar impressiveness, because of the presence in the rooms in which they are shown of a series of models of the dolmens themselves, to a scale of one-twentieth, and so constructed as to show at a glance all the peculiar features of their form and structure. The Bronze Age collections are not so striking, and the

indigenous culture of the early Iron Age is overshadowed by the enormous development of the Gallo-Roman series.

The National Museum of Central Germany at Mayence occupies one side of a large quadrangular building, formerly the Electoral palace. In this building are grouped a public library, a picture gallery, a series of natural history collections, and the historical and archæological collections of the Romish-Germanischen Museum of Central Germany. It is only with these last that we have to do in the present instance. The archæological collections occupy a suite of six spacious halls on one side of the quadrangle, and the basement floors underneath the picture gallery on another side. A large and unusually interesting series of Roman monuments and sculpture occupies the basement floors, and the general collection is classified in three divisions in the other rooms—(1) the prehistoric collection, (2) the Frankish and Allemanish or Old German, and (3) the Middle Age German. The methods of exhibition by wall cases and table cases are similar to those described at St Germain's but the fittings are less expensive, and there is less of that obtrusive showiness which marks the general aspect of the French museum. The nature of the collection also is entirely different. There is of course no German series answering to the "palæolithic" series from the drifts and caves of France, and the Stone Age collections here, though not of great extent, exhibit some peculiarly interesting types. The Bronze Age series is also distinctive in character, presenting a considerable variety of types of objects of personal decoration and equipment which do not exist at all in Scotland. The Iron Age series is most largely developed, and discloses the existence of an old Germanic culture of great power and strongly-marked individuality. The Roman, or more properly the Romish-German section, is also largely developed, and of it there is a pretty fully detailed catalogue. There is also a synopsis of the prehistoric collection, which gives a general view of the classified objects, but does not serve the special purposes of a detailed catalogue. The museum is open free on two days a week from two to five, at other times a charge of one shilling is made for admission.

The National Museum at Brussels is a Museum of Natural History, in which quaternary man and his works in the early prehistoric ages are

arranged in the concluding section among the remains of the great extinct mammalia. There is some reason in thus treating the early history of man as a part of the biological history of the Belgian area, because in this area the most prominent fact in his early history is the intimacy of his associations with the great extinct animals of the quaternary period. The department of this museum which is devoted to the extinct animals is probably the largest and finest collection of its kind in the world, containing magnificent skeletons of the mammoth (*Elephas primigenius*) and the smaller extinct elephant (*Elephas antiquus*), a large number of skeletons of the cave-bear, the megaceros, urus, cave lion, &c. Two halls of considerable size adjoining those in which the extinct animals are arranged are devoted to the purely archaeological series. It consists mainly of the results of the explorations of the Belgian caves. There is no systematic series of the Stone Age as otherwise represented, and no Bronze or Iron Age collections. It is therefore essentially a cave collection, and the objects which it contains are those which are systematically described in M. Dupont's work *L'Homme Fossile*. There is a supplementary collection of great interest, however, consisting of roughly chipped implements of flint from Spiennes and Mesvins, the former being the refuse of an extensive prehistoric manufactory of flint implements, and the latter apparently analogous to the river drift forms of England and France. The collection as a whole suffers from its position as a mere adjunct to a great natural history collection, and the rooms to which it has been relegated are not well adapted to their purpose. The cave collections are arranged in a gallery cave by cave, the manufactured articles in desk cases on the front of the gallery on the one hand, and the animal remains in wall cases on the other, as the visitor proceeds through the gallery. Some of these collections are very extensive, upwards of 30,000 flint implements and flakes having been found in the cave of the Trou du Chaloux alone. The Spiennes and Mesvins collections are arranged in wall cases of considerable height, and as the upper shelves are above the level of the eye the expedient of glass shelves has been resorted to, but the effect is somewhat confusing. There is no detailed catalogue of the collections.

The methods of dealing with the Middle Age collections which has

been adopted in France and Belgium is perhaps justified by their extent and importance. Instead of being treated as a continuation of the earlier series, they are exhibited separately in museums specially or principally devoted to Middle Age antiquities. The arrangement may have its advantages, but its principal disadvantage is obviously on the side of the public, who have thus to visit two places instead of one.

The Cluny Museum at Paris, and the Museum of the Porte de Hal at Brussels, are so surprisingly rich in their illustrations of the industrial arts of the Middle Age and Renaissance periods that it is almost impossible by mere description to give any adequate idea of the general nature of their collections, which must be seen to be appreciated. In the Cluny Museum there is a small prehistoric collection, but it counts for nothing in the vast assemblage of relics of the historic ages, which present an almost unbroken series, exhibiting the progress of culture and civilisation in Western Europe from the time of the disintegration of the Roman Empire to the period of the Revolution. Perhaps the most remarkable objects in this museum are the eight votive crowns of gold, which formed part of a hoard of twenty-four found buried in the earth in the neighbourhood of Toledo in Spain, and ranging in date apparently from the seventh to the eighth century. The collection is also exceedingly rich in ecclesiastical sculpture of early date; and the series of ecclesiastical vessels, insignia, and vestments is naturally very extensive, exhibiting excellent examples of the best metal work, enamelling, jewellery, carved ivories, and textile fabrics and embroidery, from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. Objects of domestic use prior to the sixteenth century are rare, but the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are amply represented; and these two departments, the ecclesiastical prior to the sixteenth century and the domestic of the two succeeding centuries, may be said to form the bulk of the museum. There is an old catalogue, with several supplements, which are not quite easy of application to the various departments of the collection.

The composition of the collection in the Museum of the Porte de Hal at Brussels, is more general in its character, being complicated by the presence in one set of rooms of the Musée Ravestein, containing an extensive series of Egyptian, Etruscan, and Roman antiquities, of which

there is a separate catalogue. Discounting this extraneous admixture, the Belgian mediæval collection is singularly rich in the three departments of ecclesiastical objects, arms and armour, and pottery. Unfortunately there is no detailed catalogue except of the Musee Ravestein.

Both these collections are located in mediæval buildings, which are not well suited for the purpose in some respects, although they impart a certain air of congruity and fitness to the general effect. Space and light are essential requisites for the proper display of a mediæval collection which necessarily includes a large proportion of bulky objects of more or less incongruous character, as well as of sculpture and carving, much of which may have been intended to be seen from a certain distance. Such objects, when intermingled and crowded together in small rooms and dingy corridors, lose much of their interest and more of their utility. This subdivision of the national collections by the separation of the historic from the prehistoric sections, and their exhibition in different buildings, which has been adopted in France and Belgium, does not exist in Germany—as I have already stated, the Central German Museum at Mayence has a department of mediæval antiquities in the same building. It exists in a modified form at Copenhagen, where the Museum of the Rosenborg Palace forms a supplemental collection to that of the Royal Museum of Old Northern Antiquities in the Crown Prince's Palace, which begins with the Prehistoric and ends with the Reformation.

The importance of public museums as an educational agency, is nowhere more fully recognised than in France. Besides these collections, which have already been noticed and which are specially national in the sense that they are chiefly devoted to the elucidation of the national history, there is also in Paris a collection specially devoted to the illustration of the fine arts of antiquity, the greatest and most magnificent in the world, so splendidly exhibited in the palatial halls of the Louvre that it has become a national glory to France—an achievement in the promotion of culture of which any nation may well be proud. But it is also a special feature of the recent attitude of the central government towards the general promotion of culture, that institutions with this object in view have been created not in the capital alone, but in the chief town of every department, and even in the smaller towns

wherever the municipality has shown a desire to co-operate for that end. The older provincial museums of France were for the most part modelled on the original idea of such an institution, which included a gallery of paintings and small supplementary collections of antiquities, chiefly relating to the fine arts, and occasionally also a collection of natural history and the natural sciences generally. In course of time it came to be seen that each of these separate departments or collections had its own separate function to fulfil in the promotion of the general culture, as the basis of popular education was widened, and the desire for special instruction grew stronger and more pervading. Thus we find that while in many of the smaller towns the old system of the composite museum, embracing a gallery of pictures, a collection of natural history, and a collection of antiquities, still prevails, there are now in most of the larger towns separate institutions representing the Museum of Painting, usually with an affiliated school of art; the Museum of the Natural Sciences, often with special affiliation to some university or technical school; and the Museum of Antiquities, commonly also with some affiliation to a provincial society for the preservation and protection of ancient monuments. There are upwards of a hundred such museums in the provincial towns of France, usually located in some public building, and equipped and maintained at the public expense.

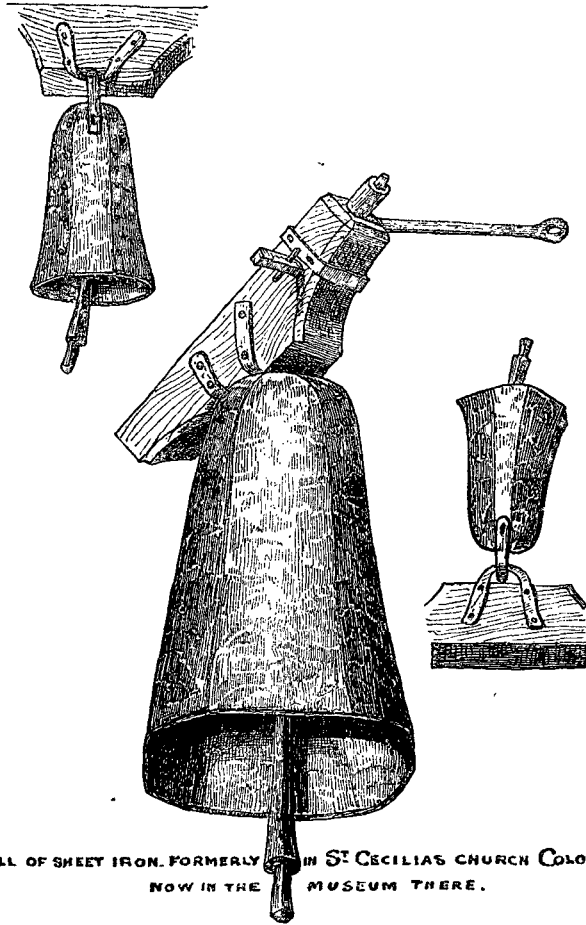
The Provincial Museum of Picardy, located in a spacious new building in the city of Amiens, which also contains the provincial gallery of painting, is a fairly representative example of the class to which it belongs. Its collections present a distinctively provincial aspect, and therefore possess an archaeological interest and importance which would not belong to them if they were less special and local in character. There is a small, but fairly representative series of the rude implements from the river drifts of the district; the series from the dolmens and the surface deposits is fairly representative; the Bronze Age collections are of considerable extent, and present some interesting hoards and peculiar types; the Gaulish and Gallo-Roman collections are extensive and valuable; and the ecclesiastical and mediæval collections are of considerable extent, and contain many objects of special interest, among which I noticed two iron quadrangular bells of the Celtic type, unfortunately without histories. The museum

is beautifully fitted up, and the collections in general well arranged, though the classification is occasionally at fault, as when a fine specimen of the thin flat triangular blade of the early Bronze Age is mistaken for the belt-ending of the Merovingian period, and other objects of Bronze Age are placed among relics of the Roman occupation. There is a well-printed catalogue, which is, however, deficient in details and localities.

The Museum of the Department of Seine Inferieure, located in the old convent of St Mary in Rouen, is a still more remarkable collection, extremely rich in Gallo-Roman relics and in ecclesiastical and mediæval objects of peculiar interest. Its special character was given to it by its first director, the Abbé Cochet, whose works on the underground antiquities of Normandy, and chiefly on early Christian burials, are so well known to archæologists. Its prehistoric collections, though not of great extent, are also of special interest, because as a group they present the peculiar complexion of the provincial area from which they are derived. The building is too small for the collection, and not so well suited for its display as will be the modern edifice which is to be erected for it. The catalogue has been long out of print, and no copy was attainable.

These two museums will stand for typical examples of the provincial Museums of France, and for a German example I shall take that of Cologne. It is of the old type, a compound of a picture gallery and a museum of antiquities. It is located in a spacious new building, and the antiquities are arranged for the most part in a cloister-like quadrangle surrounding the central court. Its archæological character is Roman and Romish German, with a supplemental collection of ecclesiastical and mediæval objects. The departments in which it is strongest are those of Roman and Romanesque sculpture, early glass, and mosaic-work. There is a small but choice collection of ecclesiastical antiquities, principally vestments and altar furniture and insignia, in the Archiepiscopal Museum, a single room on the ground floor of a house in the square facing the cathedral. A curious incident, illustrative of the difficulty of hunting down a special object which is sometimes met with, occurred to us in Cologne. Having seen it stated that there was in the church of St Cecilia a bell called *The Soufang*, I felt that it was my duty to see a bell with such a name. But we altogether failed in obtaining any

trace of it in or about St Cecilia's. At last it was suggested to us that it had probably been removed to the museum. We had previously



BELL OF SHEET IRON. FORMERLY IN ST CECILIAS CHURCH COLOGNE
NOW IN THE MUSEUM THERE.

examined both museums, but we went back and went over them again, and finally succeeded in getting it hunted out from beneath one of the

cases, where it had been ignominiously stored away out of sight. It is a most curious bell, as will be seen from the drawing which Mr Walker made of it, the only other bell of the kind which I know in Europe being the bell at the old monastery of St Gall in Switzerland, which is one of the relics of the Celtic foundation there by Cellach, the companion of Columbanus. "The Soufang" of St Cecilia's differs in form from our Celtic bells, but like many of them it is made of sheet iron $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick, bronzed, and rivetted up the sides. It measures $16\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height, $12\frac{3}{4}$ by $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches across the mouth inside, and the tongue projects $5\frac{3}{8}$ inches.

The Museum of Namur, which is under the charge of the Archaeological Society of Namur, is located in a curious mediæval building which was formerly the butchery of the town. It consists, like many of the provincial collections, of a small gallery of pictures conjoined with an archæological and mediæval collection. In this instance, however, the picture gallery is small and unimportant, while the archæological department consists of an extensive and important collection, well arranged and well cared for. It is arranged on three floors of the building, the first two containing the prehistoric, Roman, Belgo-Roman, and Frankish collections, and the third, the pictures and the ecclesiastical and mediæval collections. The prehistoric collection is specially rich in cave deposits from the neighbouring valleys of the Meuse and Sambre. The surface and sepulchral deposits are less abundantly represented, and the Bronze Age scarcely shows itself in comparison with the excessive development of the later Iron Age, represented by the contents of Belgo-Roman and Frankish cemeteries, excavated in the province of Namur. Unfortunately, there is no catalogue of this interesting collection.

As a rule, the Museums of the Rhineland and Belgium are inferior to those of France in the extent and variety of their collections of the prehistoric, and they do not equal the French in the art of display, but what they have done has been done with thoroughness and evident desire to secure the public utility of their collections.

Having some years ago visited the national collections of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, and having now also seen those of France, Central Germany, and Belgium, I have to say that, so far as I am able to judge,

and to judge with impartiality, I have seen none that is more distinctively and representatively national than the national collection of Scotland. The national collection of France is of course very much larger, but it is drawn from a national area which is six times larger than ours. The Danish collection is very much larger, and especially in its Bronze and Iron Ages much more complete; but Denmark, though a smaller area than Scotland, is immeasurably richer in its archæological deposits. The nature of the collection which it is possible to make in each national area differs necessarily as the populations themselves have differed in racial character, in habits and customs, in their indigenous culture, and in their contact with extraneous culture. Hence it is not easy to compare the collections one with another; but when once a knowledge has been acquired of the nature and typical characteristics of other collections, it is not difficult to point out the distinctive features which constitute the national characteristics of each. In point of fact, it is only from the knowledge of what are the features of other national collections that we arrive at the knowledge of what are the distinctively national features of our own. Let me briefly indicate these in conclusion.

The Scottish collection has no palæolithic series, because, so far as our present knowledge goes, the types do not exist in Scotland. In place of them (I speak of a vague general resemblance in some respects which is not typical, and has no bearing on the chronological relations of the two groups), we have a series of rude stone implements of types that are absolutely unrepresented in the Stone Age series of any other country. We divide with Norway the archæological distinction of possessing a small collection of what they call "arctic forms" of stone implements, forms which have been nowhere found unless in the north of Scotland and the north of Norway. We also divide with Norway the distinction of possessing a still more remarkable collection of sepulchral urns of stone, the specimens of which in our collection, and found in Scotland, are by far the largest and the finest in existence. No series of polished stone implements that I have seen exceeds that of Scotland in extent and variety, unless that of Denmark; but, on the other hand, there is no collection in Europe which at all approaches the Scottish collection of arrow-heads and small-sized implements of flint, if we had only the room

to spread them out and let them be seen. In their collections of the bronze objects of the Bronze Age, the Museum at Copenhagen is certainly unsurpassed, unless by Dublin ; but if we take the Bronze Age as a whole, the singular development of the sepulchral series in Scotland makes up for the deficiency, and presents a collection which has no rival in the world. In point of fact, the types of sepulchral pottery, which are commonest with us, are either wholly absent or but feebly represented on the Continent. There also our early Iron Age types are totally unknown. The great series of Broch relics, which is such a distinctive feature in our Museum, has no counterpart in any other. Our early Celtic remains, including the magnificent series of bronze armlets and the groups of ornamented stone balls, are not represented anywhere on the Continent. Nor is there anywhere a single example of the wonderfully intricate and beautiful gold and silver work of our early Christian period, except a few instances in Norway, carried over among the miscellaneous plunder of the Vikings. Our series of Celtic monuments, of course, has no representative in foreign museums. And there is no European country which possesses a phase of indigenous art—surviving to the commencement of the last century, and by the genuine individuality of its style of decoration, imparting a distinctively national character to the musical instruments, the arms, the personal ornaments, and other articles of daily use among the people—similar to that phase of native art which Scotland possesses, and which is now so strikingly illustrated in our collection of Highland relics.

And finally, while I have nowhere seen a collection more completely illustrative of the whole consecutive history of culture as represented by successive developments of industrial arts within the area from which it is derived, than that which is now stored, but which cannot be said to be exhibited, in our Scottish National Museum, I have nowhere seen a collection of such interest and importance, provided with equipment and accommodation so obviously disproportionate to its intrinsic merits.