

course, and where from the jostling, and jockeyship, some unlucky whip was sometimes spilt, and killed, here was a gate on purpose to remove the dead body, and for no other use, the Roman superstition deeming it ominous even to pass a gate where a corpse had gone through. Around the walls are still the remains of the Terra Cotta vases with which they were once filled, and the Egyptian Obelisk that did stand in the middle of this Circus is now in the Piazza Navona.

The combats of men with wild beasts were exhibited in these Circi, but it was in the Circus Maximus that assembled thousands witnessed that memorable instance of grateful recollection in the noble lion who instead of devouring Androcles fell to licking his feet:

CANOVA.—Rome abounds with artists in every department, and of every country. To this focus, and centre, of art, ancient, and modern, all who can gladly come, and, I believe, that by the regulations of the French Academy of Arts all their students, and competitors for distinction, are obliged to study here for five years.

It is no little gratification to find a ready access to the productions of genius, and not a little delight have I experienced this morning in admiring the efforts of one, in my opinion, of the greatest sculptors of any age or country:—Canova.

It is so much the mode to vaunt the matchless

arts of Greece, and Rome, that it seems a bold attempt to prove any thing modern worthy of such comparison. Doubtless there are relics of ancient sculpture, pre-eminent, surpassing, godlike. At the downfall of Greece, and Rome, the art seemed lost; witness the rude, the wretched, efforts of the middle, and darker, ages to revive it. These miserable productions, contrasted with the perfections of antiquity, occasionally dug from ancient ruins, naturally, by contrast, tended to debase the living art in proportion as it exalted the antique. But, can the wondrous faculties of man, ever straining towards perfection, be stationary? In these modern days are there not sculptors whose genius may vie with ancient Greece? Indeed I deem there are. I could enumerate several, but it is of Canova that I here speak, whose chisel may, I think, compete with any production of antiquity.

To enumerate a few I examined in his *attelier*. His Three Graces for the Duke of Bedford. Colossal Statue of Bonaparte holding the Globe in his hand, surmounted by a figure of Victory. This vain glorious monument was ordered, I understand, by Napoleon himself, and subsequently given by Louis to the Duke of Wellington. A Venus for Mr. Hope. Endymion Sleeping—for a nobleman. A Nymph for the King of England.

These in their varying, and differing, attributes

are perhaps as fine as ever were called into life. His Chloris awakened, and his Hebe, are, I presume, known to all. The loveliest personification of exquisite feminine beauty, and in every sense the expression of the original verse.

Dorme Clorì, coll' arpa Amor la desta :
Sorge su'l fianco, e ad ascoltar s'arresta.

Chloris sleeps, but Love attunes the silver lyre ;
She wakes to rise—to listen—to admire.

The little Cupid, with his lyre, what can exceed the archness of his look, or the expression of the soft, harmonious, sounds he seems to be insinuating in her ear ?

Hebe is personified according to this verse :—

Ebe, con aureo serto incoronata,
Di nettare, e d'ambrosio, in ciel ministra.

Hebe with brows by a golden garland graced
In Heav'n pours nectar for the Gods to taste.

Rome, and the Pope, seem duly to appreciate his merits since in the Vatican, and in the same range with the Apollo, and the Laocoon, they have placed his Perseus, and his two boxers, Creugas and Damoxenus. The boxers, each a living Hercules, all muscle, and gigantic strength : Perseus a model of godlike beauty, and like the Apollo, beaming triumphant at the moment of cutting off the Gorgon's Head.*

* Perseus was the son of Jupiter and Danæ, and had bound himself to produce the head of Medusa, the only mortal of the

The attitude of these boxers so very different from the modern system in the "Fancy" of perpetual guard, and self-defence, may need some little explanation to the admirers of "Milling." They made an agreement. Creugas has given to Damoxenus his blow, the most vengeful that his utmost force could accomplish. Now it is the other's turn. Creugas stands perfectly defenceless; Damoxenus heaves his brawny hand into his antago-

three Gorgon Sisters, Stetheno, Euryale, and Medusa. They were said to have golden wings; bodies of impenetrable scales; teeth like the tusks of a wild boar; brazen hands; hair entwined with serpents; but Medusa more particularly the latter, because Neptune had been enamoured with those, originally, golden locks; she gratified his passion in the temple of Minerva, and the incensed Goddess instantly changed those beauteous curls into writhing serpents; moreover, they had the power of turning all who looked at them into stone. According to some authors the Gorgons had but one eye, and one tooth, among them, which they used in turn.

But the Gods favoured Perseus, and his virtues; accordingly Minerva gave him a reflecting shield; Mercury, wings, talaria, and a diamond dagger, called *herpe*; and Pluto a helmet to render him invisible at will. Favoured, and conducted, by Minerva, he flew through the air, either beyond the Western Ocean, or to Libya, or to Asiatic Scythia, and approaching the Gorgons at the moment they were exchanging their eye, though not venturing to look at them, except through the medium of his shield, to avoid the certainty of being turned to stone, he severed Medusa's head at a blow, while invisible to her sisters; and from its dropping blood sprang those serpents that infest Africa to this day, and also the horse Pegasus, which conveyed him through the air, and stopped at Mount Helicon, ever afterwards the seat of the Muses.

nist's body, and lays him lifeless. Wonderfully fine as are these prodigies of strength, and honoured by a temple in the Vatican of Rome, could I, for my own halls, select the works of Canova, they should be his feminine. It may be very natural that I should prefer to gaze on the fair sex rather than on my own, but where Canova has wrought female charms there we find aerial lightness, classic taste, refined judgment, beauty too perfect for mortal shape, ideal perfection.

On this same day we went to the *studio* of Thorwaldson, the Danish sculptor. The difference of the two styles is strikingly apparent; this northern artist adhering so rigidly, and inflexibly, to all the severity of the Grecian school. Drapery he seems almost invariably to disdain.

Though my own opinion be decided as to the comparative merits of the two, it were impossible not to admire his Mercury about to cut off the head of Argus. Jason with the Golden Fleece. Venus, for Lord Lucan, and his series of *bassirilievi*, 130 French feet long, descriptive of the triumphs of Alexander, executed for that noble patron of living artists, the Marquis Sommariva.

The Dane disdains all adventitious aid, or ornament; Canova polishes his marble to the last perfection, "*ad unguem*" imitating every texture of the skin; and, it is said, though I have not observed it, that he even stains the stone. If this

be so, it must be acknowledged unworthy the dignity of that art which rejects every sort of pretence, or colouring, and which ought to depend solely, and wholly, upon the purity, and perfection of form. I had the further gratification of seeing both these artists, Canova and Thorwaldson; the latter was then modelling a colossal Christ, to be surrounded with his twelve Apostles, for the cathedral of Copenhagen.

In visiting these *ateliers* I was interested in observing the process of the art from the first rough, unhewn, mass of marble, shaped by the clumsiest hands, with square, and compass, into something like the semblance of the master's model, and thence, by better hands, and various gradations, wrought up till it receive its final polish, and perfection, from the original composer.

In drawing any comparative estimate of the merits of these two greatest, yet somewhat opposite, sculptors of the modern age, that bias, or predilection, which we ourselves may feel for the particular style of art which each sculptor has adopted will make the nice-poised scale preponderate.

Thus of Thorwaldson; the admirer of the heroic, the rigid, and the grand, style of Grecian art as exemplified by that school in subjects of a heroic, and warlike, nature may look upon Thorwaldson's bassi-rilievi of the Triumphs of Alexander, (which, by the bye, were ordered by Napoleon,) as un-

rivalled ; they may deem them worthy of comparison with the Elgin, or any other, marbles that may yet survive in proof of those days of purest sculpture ; and may think that the genius of Phidias inspires, and kindles, the statuary of this Icelandic descendant.

Superadd to this merit, the greater difficulties under which the modern artist in this style labours. The pomps of ancient triumphs ; the Olympic games ; public gymnastic sports ; and by such games the perpetual inspection of the finest male forms in every variety of attitude, and exercise, undraped, long since have ceased ; the study of the human figure is confined to the artist's own chamber, while the copy of Grecian pomps, and festivals, and rites, is only from relics comparatively few, vague, and contradictory.

Yet the works of Thorwaldson's in this style are matchless, while in his bassi-rilievi generally he is pre-eminent : and he has, moreover, conceived and executed, some poetic subjects with equal felicity of fancy, and finish. Witness his *Night*,—his *Hope* :—his *Shepherd Boy*.

But when we speak of Canova, we speak of one whose luxuriant, yet chastened, fancy seems to revel in purest regions of classic fiction :—of one who has embodied in the breathing marble all the dreams of the poets :—the sculptor of the *Graces* :—the artist we should deem selected by the Gods,

and Goddesses, of Olympus to recall their attributes, their perfections, their omnipotence, as acknowledged when Greece, and Rome, worshipped their potent sway.

Yet in the heroic, the tremendous, the colossal, he has also proved his power, and the terrific group of Hercules and Lichas will ever remain to show it.

In the serious, the solemn, the pious, where is grief more poignant, contrition more profound; mortality under anguish, and godhead combined, more divine; with affliction, or beauty, more soul-striking than in his Madonnas, Magdalens, and Christ? but when, descending from religion, or from the aerial regions of poetic creation, he evokes only feminine, existing, beauty, how fascinating! what combinations of charms and perfections! how nearly voluptuous, yet still, and ever, how chaste! Methinks, the fair sex owe him no little tribute for the homage he has paid to, and for the perfection with which he has chiseled, the beauties they are endowed with; and if, Pygmalion-like, my heated fancy could lead me to love the breathing marble, assuredly it were the nymphs of Canova.