THE ANNECY ATHLETE.

By C. W. KING, M.A.

A BRONZE statuette has lately been brought to London, and offered for sale to the Trustees of the British Museum, which, both from its own extraordinary merit as a work of art, and the singular circumstances of its concealment and discovery, may be considered the most important specimen of the kind with which the National Collection has ever had the chance of being enriched.

For its description I cannot do better than quote the words of an accomplished critic writing in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who, after mentioning the want of any single specimen in the Bronze Room to image forth the beauty of actual manhood, thus continues :—"A bronze statuette has lately been submitted to the Trustees of the British Museum, in which this type of evenly-developed manhood is kept, and perfected. The figure is nearly 24 in. in height, and would seem to have been designed as the figure of an athlete. Critical authority has assigned the work to the best period of Greek art in bronze ; and from the dignity of treatment, wherein we find combined the two noblest artistic qualities of possible energy and actual repose, not less than in the beauty and stability of the workmanship, there is enough to warrant this judgment. The action of the limbs is easy and natural, and the poise of the body has been so contrived as to secure a perfect balance of the different parts. In the left foot, slightly drawn back and slightly raised from the ground, and in the right arm, thrown forward from the elbow, with the fingers separated and held as in momentary inaction, there is the finest suggestion of living and moving life. The head is turned towards the right shoulder ; the left arm, in the hand of which there remains the fragment of, possibly, a palm-branch, is drawn upwards, and bent at the elbow, as if to support the object held. A beautiful movement in the outline of the figure is brought about by

Figure of an Athlete. Found at Annecy.

throwing the weight of the body on to the right leg, which is set firmly and imaged with exquisite grace and strength. In the body itself the modelling is massive, the fine development being especially observable in the lower muscles upon the chest and shoulders. But the anatomy, though well marked, is not unduly elaborated so as to disturb the controlling impression of calm and stillness. If the work is considered in its various parts, we think the left arm and the modelling of the throat its least satisfactory features. The strongest workmanship has been given to the legs and the body; and in the former, especially, the delicate beauty of line, fit for power and equally true for grace. is delightfully rendered. In its general influence the figure is full of dignity. It possesses, like every work of high art, and more notably of Greek art, the spirit of patient beauty, which seeks no praise, being secure of its own perfection. And being a work of art, the life it images and imitates is not the life of the actual world. About the well-fashioned limbs there is no sense of present activity, for above the qualities that betoken energy and eager life there is the stronger quality of motionless repose. It is perhaps in this sense of dignified stillness, more than anything else, that the work shows its high origin, and proves its noble lineage as an achievement of art."

There cannot be any doubt that the object remaining in the hand of the figure is the stem of a palm-branch, when we compare the statuette with representations of the same nature so common in ancient gems. On these, wherever the athlete is represented in *repose* he stands in just this attitude, holding under one arm the discus with which he has gained the palm displayed in his other hand; and in Roman times (when such amusements had lost all interest for the public mind) the successful actor appears in the same pose, but with mask instead of discus in his hand. Or, again, the victorious discobolus carries, in exactly the same manner as the palm, the "reed" used in measuring the length of the throws. Another attitude of repose is that of the athlete raising to his lips the bowl that refreshed him after his exertions: this idea of the gymnasium held its ground longer than any other, and being adopted by the Romans as typical of the chief occupation of the spring-time of life, actually found place on their medals as sym-

bolical of JUVENTAS. Another attitude of the same nature, and the special favourite of the Greek engravers, was the same youth bearing on one shoulder the great metal hoop, *trochus*, and holding in one hand the hooked rod used for trundling it: an exercise that seems to have formed an important element in the training for the games. When the athlete is represented in a state of *action*—he is breaking up the ground with a mattock; leaping over a mark with heavy weights in his hands; or actually throwing the discus, with all the muscles of his body at their utmost degree of tension.

That the statuette before us belongs to a Greek school (probably not much later than Lysippus), a fact admitted without question by the acute critic above quoted, and which forced itself upon my own mind at the first view, has been fully admitted by one of our most eminent sculptors, who carefully examined the work at my request; for I was anxious to have my own judgment confirmed by another's founded on practice and experience. The same high authority particularly notices the fact of its "being the best preserved Greek bronze he had ever seen." And, certainly, this most rare of peculiarities is to the lover of the Beautiful, not one of the least of its merits. I know of no other bronze that still retains the same polish and colour that so charmed the eye of ancient connoisseurs: for the peculiar and rich tint which adds so greatly to the effect of the lines of the body, has only in few places given way to the verdigris that for the most part throws an obscuring veil over antique works in bronze. This extraordinary preservation is due to the singular measures taken by its last ancient possessor for its security; and these are best told in the very words of the intelligent archæologist, who had the rare good fortune of assisting at its disinterment.

"We receive from M. L. Revon, Director of the Museum at Annecy, the following details respecting a very important discovery which has just taken place in the environs of the capital of Upper Savoy,—

'In the outskirts of Annecy, towards the north, stretches the plain of Ferns, supposed site of the ancient station Bautus. For a long time past the excavations there have brought to light Roman antiquities—statuettes, coins, inscriptions, pottery. The most interesting articles have been either presented or sold to the Municipal Museum. Especially this

Institution has made the acquisition of a hoard discovered in March, 1866, and consisting of 10,700 coins, piled up in two vases of copper tinned. The Third Brass constitutes the majority of these pieces, of which the series extends from Caracalla down to Probus, and amongst which, chiefly conspicuous, are the coins of Gallienus, Victorinus, Tetricus (father and son), and Claudius.

'Another treasure of much greater importance has just been discovered in the same field, at a few hundred yards' distance from the town. At the request of the Florimontaine Club, the owner of the ground undertook a regular excavation for the benefit of his garden, and, as he said, for that of the Museum also, to which he was to sell all he could find. Since the beginning of November, I was present three times a day at the diggings, the results of which at first were of but trifling interest. But on the 16th I beheld the workmen extract out of a mere hollow place formed in the ground, and some 35 or 40 centimetres deep [14 to 16 inches] a deposit which was covered with a *tegula* [large flat tile]. It consisted of three heads in bronze, a large statuette, a colossal foot; the foot was thrust into the cavity of one of the heads; the statuette into another; and the whole appeared to have been purposely packed into the smallest possible space.

'The little statue is *the* important piece. It is 60 centimetres high [24 inches], and represents a young man, nude, his right arm bent back upon his chest, and holding in the left hand an object, in which some discover a palm, others the remains of a caduceus. The right foot is lost[1]—perhaps it has remained fixed to the pedestal, when the person who buried it, in his hurry, tore from it the figure, which is separated into three portions. This figure (which is attributed to some Greek artist of Hadrian's time) is distinguished by charming gracefulness, by the high finish of the modelling, and by an attitude that is supple and easy in the highest degree. According to some archæologists it represents a young athlete, who has gained the prize: others, as M. Gosse and the Marquis Campana, see in it rather a Hermes Agoraios.

[1] A singular coincidence in every particular is offered by that prettiest thing in the Townley Gallery, the Cupid bending his bow, which is of exactly the same dimensions, though in marble, and was found (1776) crammed into an amphora, having been first divested of his wings and feet (which were lost along with their plinth), at Castel di Guido, twelve miles from Rome, supposed site of the ancient Larium.—*Translator.*

'The three heads, as they bear on the necks traces of a forcible mutilation, must have belonged to busts, or rather to complete statues; a fact which is indicated by the presence of the colossal foot; by the discovery of another foot in the same place in 1760; and by the finding of a hand, adorned with a ring,[2] quite defaced with a hammer (*toute martelée*): this last was dug up in an adjoining field in August, 1867. In one of the heads we thought we recognised a Hadrian. A more minute examination, however, and the study of the magnificent work published upon the old Campana Collection, have enabled us to recognise in it the regular profile, high forehead, and beautiful curling hair of Antoninus Pius. As to the other two heads (one of which is one-third larger than life-size), it is difficult to find an attribution for them. M. Gosse is of opinion that they are proconsuls, and not emperors.[3] They have, like the first, the eyes empty, in consequence of the loss of the plates of enamel, which represented the whites and the pupils of that organ. A short beard, with harsh outlines, hair falling in straight strips upon the low forehead, give them, what with the empty and ghastly eyes, an expression rather disagreeable than pleasing.

'After the discovery of these bronzes, the owner of the field made a formal promise before the delegates of this Town, of the Museum, and of the Florimontaine Club, to give the preference to the Annecy Museum in the offers of purchase, and to let nothing go out of his house before we had been consulted. But one fine day, whilst we, confiding in the faith of this promise, were preparing to ask for a special grant from the Municipal Council, which is ever actuated by an enlightened zeal for the interests of our Museum; and whilst many of the citizens were already setting on foot a general subscription for this purpose, we learnt that the treasure had just been sold to an antiquary from Geneva, who in his turn makes it over to a wealthy collector at Paris.

'As a poor compensation the Museum has been able to buy from the workmen the most part of the things found in the diggings, which were carried on up to the end of December. The excavations have brought to light many fragments of

[2] The statue of an emperor regularly wears on the ring-finger a signet engraved with a lituus, marking his highest dignity, that of Pontifex Maximus.—*Translator.*

[3] No numismatist can doubt their being both meant for Hadrian: the face is identical with that on his early medals.—*Translator.*

pottery in terra cotta and Samian ware, tiles, and bricks; a large quantity of weights in red clay, in the shape of four-sided truncated pyramids, pierced through near the top, supposed to be counterpoises for weavers' looms. Also many iron articles, such as a small hoe, a chisel, heaps of nails, iron work for gates and palisades. Amongst the other articles to be remarked are, a bone flute with two holes, a little disk resembling the spindle-whorls of the lake-dwellings, an enormous weight in sandstone, stone pestles, and a mortar, a rubber for grinding paints, millstones in basalt or lava for handmills, the upper part of a small pilaster in white mable, having its capital decorated with palm leaves; tusks of the bear, the wild boar, the pig, and of ruminant animals. Some dozen coins presenting the types of Augustus, Vespasian, Hadrian, Antoninus, Faustina, M. Aurelius, Constantine. To close this list, the following are the potters' names that I have been able to collect upon the bottoms of vases in black and Samian ware :—AGENOR FE.—BVRDONI OF.—CAIVS —OF . CARAN—CATANIM—CATVLLVS F—COTILLM— . . . . FEC—MARINVS (five times).—ME FEC—MERGVS SEF—P—PI— PRISCVS FEC. SECVNDVS—TITVS— . . . VSI—OF . VIRIL (*Louis Revon*).'

The bronzes of which M. Revon speaks have luckily fallen into good hands. They now belong to M. Auguste Parent, whose collection of antiquities is already very important, and gives a high idea of the taste and liberality of the person who formed it. M. Parent, in fact, no longer conceals the design he has formed of making it the nucleus of a special public museum: we believe we can now make this announcement without any indiscretion. The Revue cannot too highly approve of such a design. The statuette (which we have seen) surpasses in beauty all that one can imagine.[4] We shall have occasion soon to speak again of the creation of the Parent Museum.

"Noscitur ex sociis" must have been the sole grounds for M. Revon's assigning the statuette to "a Greek artist of the times of Hadrian," and the same maxim seems to have induced others (who from their more favourable opportunities ought to have known better) to pronounce a similarly inconsiderate opinion, when the athlete was first offered to the

[4] La statuette, que nous avons vue, depasse en beaute tout ce que l'on peut imaginer."—Revue Archéologique, Jan. 1868.

ex officio Trustees of the British Museum. But a very slight acquaintance with the history of sculpture suffices to convince us that even a century earlier than Hadrian, a bronze like this could not have been produced. And this refers merely to technical considerations—the fine quality of the metal, and the wonderful nicety of its manipulation. Many allusions of Pliny's in his chapters upon Bronze tend to imply this fact; but one passage in particular is altogether conclusive. "That statue (the colossus of Nero) was a striking proof that the art of casting bronze was utterly lost;[5] since both Nero was ready to furnish any amount required of gold and silver [for mixing with the copper to improve its colour, as in the celebrated Coreathean Brass,] and Zenodorus was held inferior to none of the ancient artists in his knowledge of modelling and of chasing in relief. During the time he was engaged in making the statue [colossal Mercury] for the Arverni, when Dubius Avitus was governor of that province, there were two cups chased by the hand of Calamis (a present, much prized, from Germanicus Cæsar to Cassius Silanus, Avitus's uncle, and his own tutor), which Zenodorus copied in such a way that there was hardly any perceptible difference in the workmanship. The greater the excellence of Zenodorus in art, the more deplorable the decay of bronze casting (*æris obliteratio.*)" And these remarks of the old Roman connoisseur upon the marked difference between the old Grecian metal, and that employed by the statuaries of the Cæsars, is clearly borne out by a comparison of the athlete with the heads in whose company it was found. And yet these heads belong to the very period when Roman art had reached its highest excellence—the great Renaissance, so to speak, brought about by Hadrian's matchless taste, and liberal encouragement of the genius yet smouldering in the Grecian breast—a revival that produced works in *marble* (as the Lateran Antinous proves) equal, perhaps superior, in expression to anything done before. And yet the two heads of this Emperor from the same hiding-place (one of them of the "heroic size," and evidently belonging to a statue of such importance as to have commanded the best talent of the day), to say nothing of the stiffness and inelegance of the treatment, declare the badness of their metal by its corroded

[5] "Ea statua indicavit interisse fundendi æris scientiam."—(H. N. xxxiv. 18). The text is Jau's, but the old division of chapters is retained in my quotations.

surface, and want of sharpness in taking the impression of the mould.

Another opinion has been expressed (but I can hardly believe seriously) that this entire *trouvaille* of bronzes is not only of one and the same date, but of Gallo-Roman manufacture. Those who hold this opinion would probably be inclined to change it were they to compare the athlete with the indubitable Gallo-Roman bronzes, such as those figured from time to time by Dr. Keller in the "Indicateur d'Antiquités Suisses,"—hideous *lares* and *penates*, own brothers to those so frequently exhumed on Roman-British sites (but in all probability of Gallic casting): or again to measure its drawing and spirit with the most important existing Gallo-Roman sculptures in stone, as the Gallic Chief in the Musée Calvet, Avignon; the reliefs on the arch at Orange; or the great statues of the gods at the Musée des Thermes; or if one wishes to learn the character of real Gallo-Roman art through the medium of its most numerous productions, he will find ample illustration in the terra-cotta *figurines* of the Clermont Museum; or in the subjects embossed on the Samian ware, so largely exported from the Gallic potteries. In all these remains of the Gallo-Roman school, to which these critics would assign a statuette whose extraordinary merit is admitted by the most eminent sculptor we possess, everything betrays not only an absolute inability of imitating Nature, but even of copying decently any pattern chosen for imitation. The same objection applies, with almost equal force, in the case of the three Imperial heads. The slightest consideration might have shown the improbability (not to say impossibility) of an insignificant little town like Bautus possessing either artists or founderies capable of turning out colossal statues in bronze. How much more natural to suppose them executed at the capital, to the order of some exuberantly loyal prefect, and forwarded from thence to their destination—the means of transport being as easy then all over Italy and Cisalpine Gaul as at any later time before railroads were known. Statues of this nature are of small comparative weight, and easy of conveyance. And those of one of the Emperors in question were at that very time being multiplied at a rate that baffles calculation, for Pausanias saw the precincts of the Olympium (half-a-mile in circuit) crowded with statues of Hadrian alone

—each one of the numerous colonies of Athens having erected one there at its own expense. That the manufacture of bronze statues formed a great branch of industry at Rome is amusingly illustrated by some allusions of Martial, who compares a deafening din to that made in putting together the parts of an equestrian statue :—

"Causidicum medio cum faber aptat equo ; —— "

erected to some eminent barrister by his grateful clients ; for the ancients presented a man with his own statue, where we should with a piece of plate. And in another epigram the poet enumerates, amongst the various noises that banish sleep from Rome, the perpetual ringing of the statuary's hammer :—

"Ludimagistri mane, nocte pistores, Ærariorum marculi die toto."

And to sum up all, these three Imperial heads are neither better nor worse, as to design and workmanship, than those which we know were made at Rome itself. Of the innumerable array of the latter, no more than two have escaped—

"The Goth, the Christian, Time, war, flood, and fire ;"

but fortunately these two exemplify as many separate centuries of Roman art. The first is the immense head of Nero, now standing in the court of the Senatorial Palace on the Capitol, and popularly supposed to have belonged to the already mentioned Colossus, but for which the head of Apollo had been substituted by Vespasian, "as a punishment for that emperor's crimes." The other is the well-known equestrian figure of M. Aurelius, which is somewhat above life-size ; and has been erected in front of the same Palace. The head of Nero has nothing about it so striking as its extreme stiffness, which has all the character of Etruscan work ; and this is remarkably conspicuous in the hair, and produces there the same disagreeable effect that M. Revon censures in the two portraits of Hadrian.

Though bronze figures continued to be manufactured (and more numerously than ever) both in Pliny's age and for two centuries later, yet these were merely religious or monumental, not "objects of high art," but aids to devotion, and tutelary symbols, or else expressions of adulation, or personal vanity. With these the men of taste did not concern

themselves; some of their company (like our own mediævalists) admired nothing but what was archaic and ugly:—

"Quid sculptum infabre, quid fusum durius esset;"

after the rule of Horace's model collector, Damasippus; these admitted nothing into their cabinets but "Tyrrhena sigilla," the stiff, truly Gothic, Etruscan bronzes, still extant in such prodigious numbers, and amply bearing out Pliny's assertion of the very ancient claim of Italy to the practice of bronze-casting in the existence of the "signa Tuscanica" scattered all over the world; and again that only the works of "old Greek" statuaries were prized by the virtuosi of his age, appears from a remark of Pliny's, when describing the composition of the Corinthian Brass,—a metal we should call gold of low standard (*l.c.* 3). "The greater part of them [speaking of amateurs] seem to me to *pretend* to a knowledge, rather than to possess any deeper understanding in the matter than the rest of the world, and this I will prove in a few words. Corinth was taken in the 3rd year of the 158th Olympiad, that is, in the 658th of our City, whereas those eminent sculptors, all whose statues these people call 'Corinthian,' had come to an end some generations before: on which account, in order to convict them, we will give the dates of the artists further on. . . . . The only *Corinthian* articles, therefore, are vessels, such as those men of taste employ sometimes for table service, and sometimes for lamps or chamber-pots, without any consideration of refinement." Hence it appears that the Roman amateurs called all old bronzes that were not in the archaic Etruscan style, by the name of 'Corinthian;' just as their brethren of to-day term all metal work, that is not Gothic, 'Cinque cento Florentine,' whether made in Italy, Germany, Flanders, or France.

We need not be surprised at so noble a monument of Hellenic skill, as this Annecy bronze, finding its way into the wilds of Helvetia; after reading Pliny's short chapter (*l. c.* 8). "Very many people are so enamoured of the statues called 'Corinthian,' that they carry them about with them wherever they go, as did the orator Hortensius with the Sphinx which he had extorted out of his client Verres (on account of which Cicero, in a dispute, when he declared 'he did not understand riddles,' replied that 'he ought; for he had got the Sphinx at his house'). The Emperor Nero carried

about with him the Amazon (about which we shall speak further on) ; and a little before him, C. Cestius, once Consul, had done the same, and which he kept with him ever during battle.[6] The tent of Alexander the Great is recorded to have been supported by statues ; out of which number a couple have been dedicated and stand in front of the temple of Mars Ultor ; and as many more in front of the *Regia*."

But the most famous of these travelling companions, from the great names with which it is connected, is the Hercules whose history is related in one of the most interesting of the many curious fugitive poems in the Sylvae of Statius (IV. 6). This Hercules, styled "Epitrapezios," from being designed to stand upon a dinner-table, was made by Lysippus for Alexander (the royal house of Macedon traced their descent through Caranus up to the demi-god) ; and followed the hero in all his campaigns through Greece, Persia, and India. Nay, at his last banquet, when about to raise to his lips the poisoned cup, the deity warned him of his approaching fate by assuming an aspect far different from the genial one he properly wore, and bursting into a cold sweat when grasped by the royal hand as he invoked the god. Next, the course of heritance not recorded, the little Hercules figures in the same capacity upon the table of Hannibal ; and very properly so, for he was the patron-god of Tyre ; and, under the name of Mel-earth, that of her colony Carthage. But Statius will have it that the Hellenic deity accompanied the African chief, sorely against his will, when he ravaged Italy ; but most of all, when he gave Saguntum to the flames, a city under the especial patronage of himself.

The third owner of note was the Dictator Sylla, over whose riotous banquets the god was forced to preside ; and finally he catches the eye, and charms the soul of Statius, amidst the multifarious treasures of art collected by Novius Vindex, the acutest connoisseur ever known :—

> "Quis namque oculis certaverit unquam
> Vindicis, artificum veteres agnoscere ductus,
> Et non inscriptis auctorem reddere signis !"

The figure which, by its force and majesty, so impressed the poet's mind :—

> "Tantus honos operi, finesque infusa per arctos . . . Majestas !"

[6] A proof of its being a small portable statuette.

was of very small dimensions, under a foot in height as it sat. The god, to suit his character of "Epitrapezios," held in one hand a cup, the other resting on his club; the Nemean lion's hide spread over a rock furnished his seat. Statius, a man of the most refined taste (as his writings everywhere evince), justly exclaims in admiration at the sculptor's versatility of talent, that could with equal success model ornaments for the dinner table, and colossi of the largest size:—

> "Quis modus in dextra, quanta experientia docti
> Artificis curis, pariter gestamina mensis
> Fingere, et ingentes animo versare colossos!"

And this solitary record enables us to accept Pliny's otherwise preposterous statement that Lysippus "had executed no fewer than *fifteen hundred* statues with his own hand;" as was proved after his death upon the opening of the money-box, into which he had made it a rule to drop *one* gold piece out of the payment received for each work. No doubt this travelling companion of Alexander was but one of a glorious company of miniature deities bespoken by Macedonian generals and nobles, compelled by fashion to imitate their great leader in his patronage of art. And as a *pendant* to this convivial Hercules, may be introduced another, of about the same dimensions, and well deserving, from its perfect workmanship, and striking expression of its meaning, to be assigned to the same lofty origin as the crowning glory of the Vindex collection. It is now the chief ornament in its class of the Museum at Parma, having been discovered in the ruins of that second Pompeii, Velleja, some thirty miles distant from that city. The statuette is mounted on a marble pedestal, with an inscription commemorating its presentation to a club of *bon vivants*, "Sodales Herculei," of the place under the god's especial patronage, by one of their members—evidently as an example to be followed, for the figure represents him reeling, and unmistakably overpowered by the influence of his brother, the god of wine.

To understand what the "signa Corinthia," so much prized by the amateurs of Pliny's day, really were, one must study the bronzes in the Museum of Naples. These bronzes proceed from the discoveries at Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Stabiae: their ultimate date therefore is precisely fixed; they must have been made before the Roman school came into exist-

ence: they were collected as treasures of art by Pliny's own contemporaries. The series therefore of these bronzes at Naples supplies an infallible criterion for distinguishing the Grecian from the Imperial Roman manufacture. The result of such study will be the conviction that the two classes differ from each other as essentially in taste and execution as do the Greek and Roman coins, and that the bronze *figurines* of the Empire were the production of a state of feelings totally different from that which inspired the demand for similar articles in the flourishing times of Greece. The Roman bronzes certainly come to light (as I have already noticed) in great numbers, but they are for the most part "superstitious images,"—household gods, animals, wild and domestic, probably conveying some religious symbolism · with occasional *genre* subjects, amongst which cup-bearers naturally predominate. It is evident, both from classical allusions and existing remains, that Greece alone supplied the Roman dilettanti with bronzes worthy to be regarded as works of art, precisely to the same degree as the Florence of the sixteenth century is the source of all similar productions that display superior merit and originality, whether in the design or the actual manipulation of the metal. It is equally evident from Pliny's disparaging tone, that no Roman man of taste would have condescended to admit into his gallery a home-made bronze any more than his brother of our own day would give a place on his shelves to a Birmingham brass casting. And equally in either case demand produced supply, though the genuine article grew rarer and rarer every year. Phædrus, writing under Augustus when art-mania was at its height, has a curious notice of this fact by way of simile: "As some artists do in our age, who get a better price for a new-made work, if they inscribe 'Praxiteles' on a marble of their own make, or 'Myroi' on a well-worn piece of plate" (V. Prolog.). Nevertheless, the quantity of bronzes brought into Italy, in the course of the two previous centuries, by the Roman conquest of European and Asiatic Greece, absolutely exceeds all limits of modern credibility. A few examples may be opportunely cited for the benefit of the reader who may have paid no attention to that chapter in the history of art. The Romans, says Plutarch in his 'Life of Marcellus,' were first made acquainted with Greek art by that general's capture of Syracuse, when he divided

the statues and paintings of that wealthy city between the Temple of the Cabiri in Samothrace, and the public buildings of Rome: an innovation looked upon very unfavourably by the old Conservatives of those times. Nothing, however, sets the extent of such spoliation in a stronger light than Pliny's incidental notice of the *three thousand* bronze statues *(signa ærea)* belonging to Scaurus, Sylla's stepson, and employed to decorate the temporary theatre so vividly described by that invaluable historian (xxxvi. 24). The ruinous fine of 20,000 talents (£4,000,000) imposed by his cruel step-father upon the cities of Asia Minor, for siding with Mithridates, and which they had been forced to pay twice over, through the usurious interest at which they had to borrow the money, had doubtless stripped public and private buildings of every convertible decoration, before the citizens were driven to the last resource of selling their children for slaves. The system of forming a collection as pursued by a Roman of taste, armed with a little brief authority in a Grecian country, is very amusingly described by Cicero, in his Fourth Oration against Verres, entitled "De Signis," which is devoted expressly to this part of the misdemeanours of "cet amateur terrible."[7] But the blow most sensibly felt by the ex-governor was the orator's cruel remark that, being himself totally destitute of either taste or intelligence, he regularly employed two Greeks, *cognoscenti* by profession, to forage out for him what he ought to steal. These collectors, however, confined themselves as yet to what was private property, and paid some regard to decency by pretending to *purchase* what had taken their fancy, although it was always the *buyer* who fixed the price. But when this source was exhausted, the fury of collecting spared neither sacred nor profane: for example, Nero, who despite his professed love for Greece, made one sweep (as Pausanias tells us) of five hundred of the finest statues, "gods and men alike," at Delphi alone. By Hadrian's time, therefore, everything worth a collector's notice, and that was portable, had found its way to the palaces and villas

[7] Who for example buys up everything but a "very old wooden Fortuna" in the private chapel of Hejus, a Messenian noble, for 6000 sesterces (£60), viz. a marble Cupid by Praxiteles (the *replica* of the celebrated one at Thespiæ); a bronze Hercules by Myron; two small bronzes of Athenian virgins, holding up baskets on their heads, "Canephoræ," by Polycletus. The Cupid was put down at 1,600 sesterces (£16). Cicero makes very merry at the notion of a statue by Praxiteles selling for 400 denarii, and says it makes good the proverb, "I would rather buy than beg a thing."

of the Roman nobles ; and still the dry bones of Greece were sucked by successive curiosity hunters for the little marrow left :—

"Ossa vides regum vacuis exsucta medullis,"

says Juvenal to the young nobleman about to become a provincial governor ; and goes on to contrast the state of things at the time of the first conquest, with what it was in his own time. "*Then*, every house was full, and there stood a great heap of coin, Spartan mantles, Coan purple, and in company with the pictures of Parrhasius, and the statues of Myron, were the living ivories of Phidias ; and also many a work of Polycletus everywhere to be seen, and few dinner tables without a piece of plate by Mentor." But now-a-days nothing is left of what the provincials can be despoiled, "except a few yoke of oxen, a paltry troop of horses, or else the sire of the herd, after you have distrained upon the little farm ; then next, the very *household gods*, should there chance to be a figure amongst them worth looking at ; or the single deity standing in its little shrine" (Sat. viii. 100). The only description left us of the collection formed by a wealthy Roman art-lover is the above-quoted poem of Statius, and this suffices to show how many a Grecian house this one palace had laid under contribution. "Here you have the bronzes upon which the skilful Myron spent so much time ; the marbles that live from the chisel of the painstaking Praxiteles ; the ivory polished by the thumb of him of Pisa ;[8] the metal taught to breathe in Polycletus' furnace ; the line that from afar bespeaks Apelles."

But to return to the actual subject of this memoir :—So long as Greek art flourished, representations of the same nature employed in an especial degree the greatest sculptors of each succeeding generation ; nay, more, if we are to believe Pliny (*l. c.* 9), the same motive first transferred the honours of statuary from gods to mortals. For the earliest statues erected in memory of men were those of the victors in the Sacred Games at Olympia ; each one of whom was in his turn thus commemorated. Their figures, however, must have been somewhat idealized in these memorials, to judge from the curious fact added by Pliny, that when the person had gained the prize three several times, the statue

[8] The maker of the Olympian Jupiter; Phidias, or his assistant in that work.

was then modelled upon his actual body; and these went by the name of "portrait-figures."[9] Many sculptors of the highest reputation devoted themselves exclusively to this branch of their profession: their names are preserved (with occasional notices of their principal works), in Pliny's alphabetical list. At their head stands Colotes; a name in his day only second to that of Phidias, whom he assisted in making the colossal Jupiter of Olympia. And in the succeeding schools the most elaborate performances of the great masters are often mentioned as similar single figures of athletes—the subject naturally recommending itself to their choice from the scope it afforded for the display of anatomical knowledge; and yet more, for taste in exhibiting such knowledge in the most graceful manner. A very eminent example[1] is the Spintharus, "Victor in all five contests," by Telephanes of Phocæa, an artist who "destroyed his reputation by entering the service of Darius and Xerxes;" although he was regarded as the equal of Polycletus, Pythagoras of Rhegium, and Myron. Of Polycletus, successor to Phidias, and founder of another epoch in art, one of the most admired pieces was an athlete using the strigil—a subject the popularity of which amongst the Greeks (and nations tinctured with their civilization) is attested by its frequent occurrence upon gems in an early style: archaic Greek and Etruscan. But nothing can better exemplify the general enthusiasm for masterpieces in this branch of sculpture, than what Pliny relates concerning a statue by Lysippus, in the same action as the above-quoted one of Polycletus, and which M. Agrippa had erected in front of his newly-built baths. Tiberius admired the figure so greatly that he was unable to govern his desire for its sole possession, and therefore removed it to the palace; but so loud and persistent was the outcry at the loss, whenever the Emperor showed himself at the theatre, that he was ultimately obliged to restore the statue to its place.

Our athlete exhibits all the characters of the style of Lysippus, which Pliny thus describes:—"He is reported to have made many improvements in the art of statuary, by

[9] "Ex membris ipsorum similitudine expressa, quas 'iconicas' vocant."

[1] On account of its antiquity. This employment of Greek artists by the Achæmenian kings may account for the merit of the sculptures executed by their order. Pliny's singular expression, "quod se regum Xerxis atque Darii *officinis* dediderit," implies the *manufacture* of sculptures on an extensive scale.

representing the hair exactly ; by making the heads smaller than the old artists had done, and the bodies more slender and less fleshy ; by all which means the apparent tallness of the figures was increased. There is no Latin name for 'symmetry'—a thing to which he paid the most scrupulous attention, upon a new system never heard of before changing the square proportions [2] of the old sculptors ; and he commonly said 'that *they* represented men as they really were, but that *he* made them as they appeared to the eye.' Peculiar to this master seems to be that scrupulous finish (*argutiæ operum*) even in the minutest details of his work." These words would serve for a description of our statuette—the accurate rendering of the hair, the small head, the long legs (which some would-be critics censure as a defect) adding so greatly to the apparent height, and the extraordinary finish of the extremities so conspicuous in the finger and toe-nails. The "square, or squat, proportions" of the earlier masters are exemplified in that multitude of bronzes, generally classed under the name of Etruscan, and it is a curious fact that the *native* Roman practitioners, as exemplified in Imperial statues, sarcophagi sculptures, coin reverses, and gems, gradually returned to the old Etruscan rules, making their bodies longer and their legs shorter, until the art is lost in barbarism.

The inferiority of the Roman bronze, of which Pliny complains (a complaint so fully justified by extant specimens), may be accounted for by the large proportion of *lead* going to its composition. That writer states (*l. c.* 20) that the Campanian sort, the most admired at the time for its *colour*, contained 10 per cent. of Spanish *argentarium*. Now this argentarium was made of equal parts of tin and lead ; and therefore was much the same kind of thing as our pewter. In order to remove all doubt as to its nature, Pliny's further remark may be quoted, viz., that when the tin formed only one-third of the mixture, it was called *tertiarium*, and used for soldering leaden water-pipes (*l. c.* 48). According to this recipe, the very best quality of bronze would contain 5 per cent. of lead (sufficient to soften it considerably), whilst the common kind, that generally used in Italy, had 8 per cent. of *lead (plumbum nigrum)* added

[2] "Quadratas veterum staturas permutando."

in the smelting. His recipe for the statuary and tablet bronze, as then made, is as follows. The cake-copper *(massa*, so called because coming from the mine in the shape of round flat disks) is first melted, then there is added to it, when in a state of fusion, one-third of "scrap-bronze" *(æs collectaneum)*, that is, old worn-out articles bought up from house to house, "as there is a peculiar influence in it, for it has been subdued by wear and tear, and so to speak, *tamed* by constant scouring:" with this again was mixed $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of *argentarium*. Now the pot-metal *(æs ollare)*, which would naturally constitute the greatest part of the scrap-bronze, was copper mixed with 3 or 4 per cent. of *argentarium;* and thus further augmented the proportion of lead in the material of Roman statues. It is self-evident that even the tradition of the alloy of the old Grecian bronze had been lost long before Pliny wrote, for he makes no mention of what it was, when describing the varieties preferred for their works by different sculptors of antiquity (*l. c.* 3). After describing the Corinthian sort (which was, in truth, our "jewellers' gold," for the lowest quality contained one-third of the precious metal, and was consequently our "gold 8 carats fine"); he names three others used for statuary purposes by the great masters of old Greece. The first of these was the "hepatizon" (liver-coloured), which, however, was supposed the result of some lucky accident in the furnace (quanquam hominis manu, sed ad fortunam temperatur): the second, that invented at Delos, and which came into note from that island's having been of old the great mart of Greece; and lastly, the Eginetan, invented by the bronze-casters of that island. Pliny quotes Myron's celebrated Cow as a specimen of the latter metal; whereas Myron's contemporary and rival, Polycletus, always preferred the Delian for the material of his statues. To us, accustomed to see all bronzes with one uniform dark green coating; the antique, so coated by natural rust, the modern, by artificial oxidation—it sounds strange to hear of the *material* of a statue being immediately recognisable by its *colour*, and even deriving great additional value from that circumstance. How conspicuous was this difference of appearance in the different alloys is curiously manifested by some other remarks. "If lead be mixed with copper (cyprio), a purple colour is the result, used in the borders of robes for statues." . . . . "There is also an alloy of very soft bronze called

Formalis,[3] because a tenth part of lead, and one-twentieth of tin, are mixed with it, and thus it best assumes the colour that is termed the 'Grecian.'" But the ancients took the greatest pains to preserve the surface of their bronzes from the rust, as the following directions tend to show. "Bronzes, if wiped clean, contract rust much sooner than if left to themselves, unless they be well smeared over with olive-oil" (*l. c.* 21). And in another passage the same writer mentions the colouring of statues "by means of oil and sunshine." It follows therefore that the ancients, like the Cinque-cento Florentines, preferred the rich brown the metal assumes when thus treated—which indeed first gave it the name of "bronze." There is another remarkable passage upon the colour of ancient bronze in Plutarch's 'De Pythiae oraculis,' *cap.* 2; where the visitor to Delphi expresses his admiration at the colour of the metal in the statues before him, "which is neither like dirtiness nor verdigris, but rather a dark blue dye, so that it imparts to the figures of the Admirals (with which the sightseer begins the round) a truly marine complexion and hue." He inquires whether this unusual effect came from some ancient secret in the composition of the metal, but is told it was entirely due to the peculiar atmosphere of Delphi.

[3] The name seems to imply that this mixture was the best adapted for casting in moulds, *formæ*.