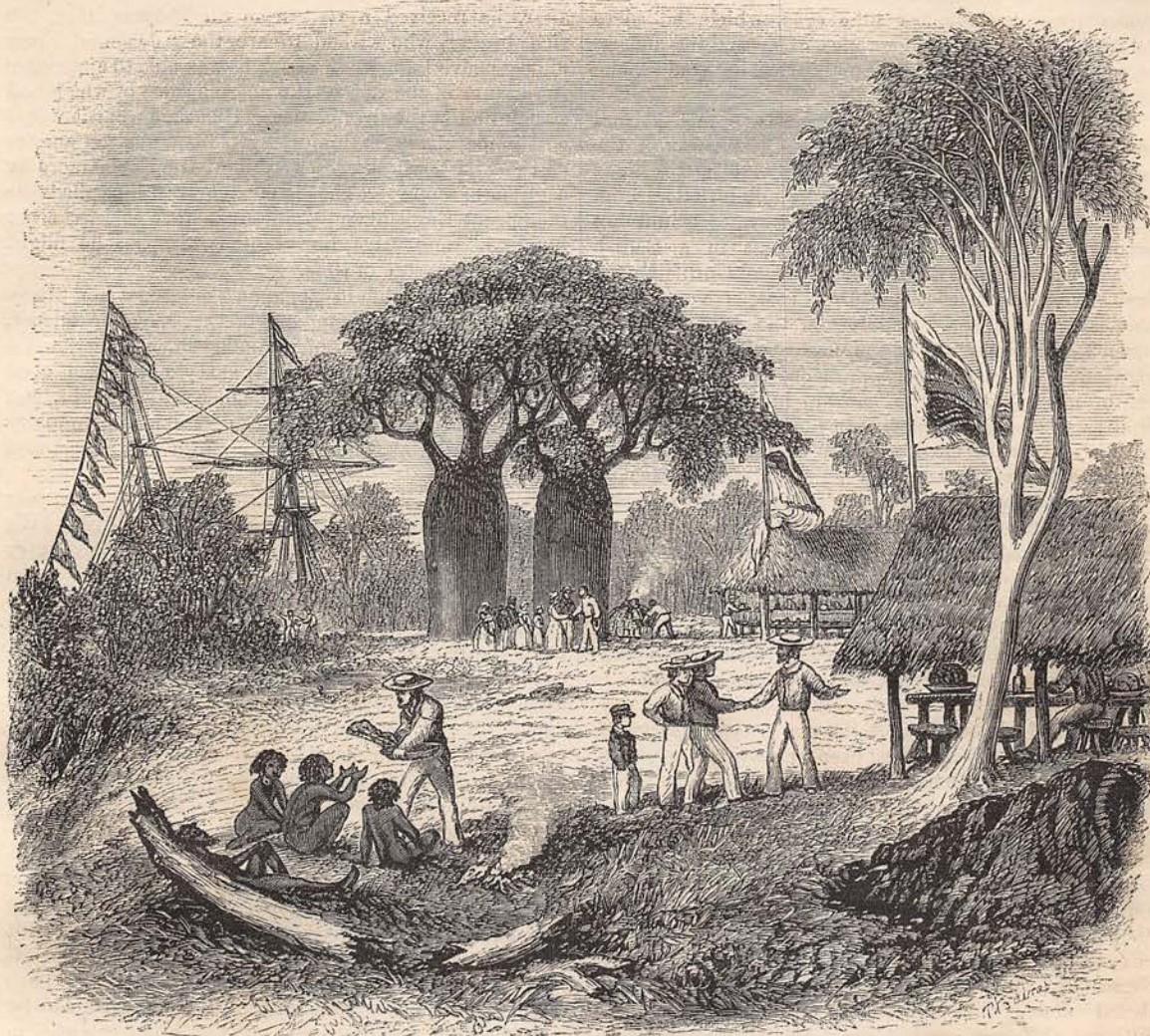


flock furnished us with fresh meat, a bottle of wine, by permission of the doctor, enabled us to drink the health of absent friends; and tea and coffee, with sugar, but without milk, and skilfully-made light cakes, followed;

which wealthy friends or elevated position confer, he succeeded in reaching an eminence in the world of art which has gained renown, not only for himself, but for his country.



CHRISTMAS-DAY IN NORTH-WEST AUSTRALIA.

and the men enjoyed themselves in reading or other quiet amusements.

I am not now giving a history of our expedition, yet I think the reader will feel sufficient interest in it to be glad to hear that Mr. Gregory explored the whole course of the Victoria River, and traced another stream, which he called Sturt's Creek, 300 miles farther into the interior—that he discovered in the vicinity of the Victoria three million acres of good pasture land, and that on his return he was rewarded by the reception of the gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society.

THORWALDSEN THE SCULPTOR.

THE recent publication in Paris of a life of this celebrated Danish sculptor,* affords a good opportunity of laying before our readers some points of his history most worthy of note. Possessing none of the advantages

Albert Bartholomew Thorwaldsen was born in Copenhagen, November 19th, 1770. His father was a native of Iceland, to which his paternal ancestors also belonged. His mother was the daughter of a Danish pastor. His childhood was unmarked by anything striking, except the delight which it gave him to be allowed to go to the workshop of his father, who was engaged as carver of figure-heads in the royal dockyard at Copenhagen. To assist in this work, as soon as he could handle the requisite tools, was a great source of pleasure to him.

In accordance with the privilege enjoyed by the children of the Government *employés*, Thorwaldsen was sent to a public school at the age of eleven. He does not appear to have made much progress with his learning, but his talent for drawing and art attracted the notice of Abildgaard, the historical painter, who, perceiving his capability of becoming something better than a ship-carver, sent him to the Academy, where he rapidly gained distinction, and took the best prizes. His earliest works were characterised by a certain amplitude and magnificence of form, but there was

* By M. Eugène Plon, with illustrations of his works.

ambiguity in the design, and affectation and want of freedom in the positions.

As a student, Thorwaldsen was very quiet and retiring. He rarely spoke, and never laughed. There was an air of melancholy about him, and a depth of mournfulness in his clear blue eyes, which, added to delicate health and an ignorance of everything unconnected with art, gave little promise that he would make his way in the world.

But though the young student was so modest and bashful, his works spoke for him; and through the patronage of Count Reventlow, he was sent to Rome with an annual allowance of four hundred thalers from the Academy. As his health and poverty would not permit a journey by land, he was sent in a Danish frigate, whose figure-head he had perhaps in his boyish days helped to carve. After a tedious voyage, he reached Rome in the beginning of the year 1797, and was astonished at the world of beauty which burst upon his view. To use his own expression, "the snow melted out of his eyes," and he saw art in such a different light as to lose all confidence in his own performances. All his ideas were changed, and with that industrious perseverance which was such an important element of his ultimate success, he devoted himself almost exclusively for five years to the study of the antique, of which he found such wonderful specimens in Rome. He renewed the acquaintance which he had formed with Carstens, one of the most remarkable painters of his time, whose influence over him while in the Academy at Copenhagen had been very great. Carstens took a great interest in the young artist, and gave him much help in his studies.

His principal friend in Rome was Zoega, the Danish archaeologist, to whom he had been warmly recommended. He gave Thorwaldsen a cordial reception, but blamed the Academy, in a private letter, for sending "such raw and ignorant people to Rome." The four years of his residence with Zoega so improved him, that from being merely a clever sculptor he became a master, and gave a direction to all the art of his time. Zoega criticised his performances very carefully, and pointed out faults in conception or execution in the most unsparing way. Eventually, however, Thorwaldsen appears to have chafed under the well-meant but uncompromising criticism of Zoega, and withdrew himself from his protection.

As a proof of the progress which he had made in Rome, Thorwaldsen modelled in plaster a life-sized statue of "Jason," which obtained the gold medal, but otherwise attracted so little attention, that he broke it up. He acquired the coveted popularity through a colossal figure of the hero, which not only drew forth universal acclamation, but led Canova, then living in Rome, to exclaim, "This work is one of a new and magnificent style of art." But notwithstanding this praise, no one seemed inclined to order a copy of it in marble, and it very nearly shared the fate of its predecessor. Thorwaldsen had exceeded the length of residence permitted by the Danish Academy, and had also exhausted his private resources. He waited week after week, and became at last thoroughly sick at heart through hope deferred. Fame, which had seemed to be approaching him with rapid strides, had again disappeared, and he decided to leave Italy. The poor artist had packed his boxes; his furniture and all superfluous articles had been sold; and he was on the point of leaving Rome, when his compatriot and fellow-student, Hagemann, with whom he had intended to travel to Berlin, found that in consequence of some informality

in their passports, it would not be possible for them to leave till the next day.

This apparently unimportant accident was the turning-point in Thorwaldsen's career. The day's delay changed the current of his future life. A few hours after, he received a visit from Sir Thomas Hope, the rich banker, who wished to see the "Jason." From his extensive knowledge of art, he was able to appreciate the beauty of the statue, the magnificence of which had struck him at the first glance. He asked what it would cost in marble. "Six hundred zechins," was the answer of the artist, whose eyes were lighted up once more by a gleam of hope. "That is far too little," replied the munificent Englishman, "you must have at least eight hundred," and gave him the marble, that he might begin without loss of time.

Thorwaldsen's life in Rome now entered a new phase. Instead of being a stipendiary of the Danish Academy, he enjoyed the position of an independent artist, and a succession of commissions continued to him the good fortune which the generous banker had brought, and which never deserted him. His genius and industry were more and more developed, and his fame increased rapidly.

In 1819, having had a dangerous illness the year before, he returned to Denmark for a brief visit. His reception may be easily imagined. The whole country was proud of him, and honours were showered upon him from every side. He was frequently invited to the royal table, and in order to be able to comply with the rigid etiquette of the Danish Court, was made a privy-councillor. His former companions gave him a very hearty welcome, which he received in a homely and affable way. The only drawback to the pleasure of his return was that his parents were unable to witness his fame, having died shortly after he went to Rome.

Thorwaldsen's visit, though very short, was highly beneficial to the progress of art in Denmark. He received a great number of inquiries as to the best means of promoting artistic taste among the people, which led him to the publication of a work on the subject some time after. But the most important result of his visit was the commission which he received for the decorations of the cathedral of Notre Dame, which had been rebuilt after its destruction during the bombardment by Nelson in 1807. The frieze and the statues executed in consequence of this order are very superior, and are almost the only specimens of religious art which we have from his chisel.

In August of the following year he set out on his return to Rome, visiting several towns on the way. At Warsaw, he took the bust of the Emperor Alexander, and received commissions for the statues of Copernicus and of Prince Poniatowsky. The latter was an equestrian statue in bronze, and was not finished till 1830. We learn with sorrow, not unmixed with disgust, that it was afterwards destroyed by the Russians when quelling the Polish insurrection.

Thorwaldsen subsequently visited Troppau, in Silesia, which was at that time rendered famous by the only event of importance which has occurred in its history—the congress of crowned heads, which met to consider the question of the suppression, by Austria, of the Neapolitan insurrection. The Emperors of Russia and Austria and the King of Prussia were present, and England and France sent ambassadors. Thorwaldsen received such a flattering reception from them, that he prolonged his stay, and went afterwards to Vienna. His residence in the Austrian capital was suddenly terminated by the alarming news from Rome, that

the floor of his studio had given way, causing the destruction of two marble statues and a model in plaster.

On his return to Rome, Thorwaldsen recommenced his labours with untiring energy. His genius and skill appeared to be inexhaustible. He was greatly pleased with the distinguished honour conferred upon him by Cardinal Gonsalvi, who entrusted him with the order for a monument to the deceased Pope Pius VII for St. Peter's. But he was not allowed to enjoy the honour in peace. On all sides there were loud and angry murmurs at a heretic being allowed to execute the statue of a pope for a Catholic cathedral. The death of the cardinal in 1824 gave the envious Roman sculptors renewed courage, especially as the numerous orders which Thorwaldsen had received had caused some delay in the completion of the monument. Their malice seemed about to be rewarded with success, when two events occurred which defeated their designs, and led him to victory.

After the retirement of the painter Canuccini from the presidency of the Academy of San Luca, in Rome, the custom required that a sculptor should be elected to succeed him. Who was more worthy of the honour than Thorwaldsen? Who would confer greater distinction on the Academy than the man whose name was famous throughout Europe? But in spite of his obvious claims to the office, his enemies repeated their objections to him as a Protestant, adding that it was impossible that any one but a Catholic could hold a position which would require his attendance at certain religious festivals.

The matter was laid before Leo XII. "Is there any doubt," asked his Holiness, "that Thorwaldsen is the greatest sculptor living in Rome?" "That cannot be denied," was the reply. "Then there can be very little difficulty about the election. He must be chosen as president. It must, however, be arranged that he shall have opportunities of reporting himself unwell when he finds it necessary." This little "Papal allocution" silenced all opposition, and on the 26th of December, 1825, Thorwaldsen was elected president of the Academy, for the usual period of three years.

The liberal opinions of Leo XII were a good omen of the success of the monument to Pius VII, but he took a more decided step by visiting Thorwaldsen's studio in person, and expressing his approbation of the work, which was in due course completed and finally erected in the year 1831.

Thorwaldsen was an object of attraction to every stranger visiting Rome. Among many other persons of celebrity, Sir Walter Scott obtained an introduction to him. Although so well acquainted with the literature of the north of Europe, Scott could only converse in his own tongue. Thorwaldsen, on his side, had but a very slight knowledge of English, so that the meeting of the two celebrated men was somewhat peculiar. They saluted each other very heartily, but could only give vent to their feelings of pleasure in broken sentences and exclamations, such as "Conocenza—charmé—plaisir—happy—acquaintance—piacere—delighted—heureux." The conversation was necessarily rather brief and scanty; but the two new friends were so pleased with each other, that they shook hands very heartily, and patted one another on the shoulder, and after they had parted, looked at each other as long as possible, nodding in the most familiar way. A simple, unaffected man himself, Thorwaldsen was delighted with all who were frank and open, and therefore felt himself attracted to Scott as soon as he saw him. He could not, on the other hand, fathom the remarkable character of Byron,

and found it quite impossible to understand his misanthropic melancholy.

In the year 1838, at the age of sixty-eight, Thorwaldsen returned to Denmark, not, as twenty years before, to pay a brief visit, but to end his days. The enthusiasm and homage of his countrymen was boundless. No sovereign ever received such touching and brilliant proofs of the love and reverence of his people. The artist was deeply moved. When, on the evening of his arrival in Copenhagen, he stood on the balcony of the academy, and saw the immense crowd below, which burst into shouts of joy at his appearance, he turned and said smilingly to his friend Thiele, "One would imagine that we were in Rome, and that I were the pope, standing in St. Peter's, and pronouncing the blessing 'urbi et orbi!'"

An interrupted succession of festivities so hindered the sculptor in his work, which he had not laid aside, that he found it necessary to retire for six months at a time to the estate of his patroness, the Baroness von Stampé, where, at her request, he executed his own statue, and the bust of Cøhlenschlager, the Danish *litterateur*. His diligence and ability were still unimpaired. The only thing which marked the approach of age was the loss of his memory, which, in regard to invitations, led to many amusing mistakes. When the dinner hour arrived, he searched among the papers lying on his table, and took the first of four or five invitations which he found. He soon found it necessary to change a system which led him to give very frequent offence, and adopted the plan of giving all such matters into the charge of a very devoted and intelligent servant, named Wilkens. If he were invited anywhere, he invariably said, "I cannot promise to come; you must ask Wilkens, he will tell you if I am disengaged or not." As Wilkens always accompanied him to and from the houses which he visited, it frequently happened that he was ignorant of where he was going even when already on the way.

Although rather parsimonious, and often suffering from attacks of hypochondria, Thorwaldsen was nevertheless a man of a generous and amiable disposition. The King of Prussia on one occasion ordered a statue from him. "Your Majesty," answered the sculptor, "there is at present one of your Majesty's subjects in Rome more competent than I am to carry out the wishes with which you have deigned to honour me. May I be permitted to recommend him to your royal patronage?" The artist thus introduced to the king was Rudolph Schadow, who was then in very depressed circumstances. His beautiful work, "The Spinning Wheel," was the result of this considerate recommendation.

In the year 1841, Thorwaldsen travelled again through Germany and Switzerland to Rome. He was everywhere received with the highest marks of esteem and respect, and after a short stay in Rome, returned to Copenhagen, where he died of an apoplectic stroke, on the 24th of March, 1844.

Having no relations, he bequeathed his large and valuable collection of statuary and casts to the state, on the condition that a building should be erected for their preservation and exhibition, which was opened in 1846, and has called forth the admiration of all visitors to Copenhagen.

Our space forbids any enumeration of his works. Many of them were so much admired that it was necessary for him to repeat them frequently. His bas-relief of Achilles witnessing the departure of Briseis is worthy of comparison with the best specimens of the antique. The statues of Schiller in Stuttgart and of Gutenberg

in Mayence have been highly praised. His last work, at which he was engaged a few hours before his death, was a statue of Luther.

PEEPS THROUGH LOOPHOLES AT MEN, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS.

BY CUTHBERT BEDE.

"'Tis pleasant, through the loopholes of retreat,
To peep at such a world; to see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd."

COWPER.

NO. XII.—CHRISTMAS HERALDS.

It was on a Monday morning, in the last week of November, in the year 1787, that an elderly man of plain, decent appearance, came to the house called Weston Lodge, in the pleasant village of Weston-Underwood, in Buckinghamshire. The lodge was situated close by the road-side, and had been the vicarage house; and, though its present occupant was not a parson, he had done more parson's work than had been accomplished by most men who have not been admitted to holy orders; for he was William Cowper, the poet. A twelvemonth since he had come to that spot from the adjacent village of Olney, where he had lived for twenty years, and where, among many other religious productions, he had written those hymns which have been a comfort and consolation to Christians throughout the world.

Cowper lived there with his dear old friend, Mrs. Unwin,* with whom he had removed from Olney. His fifty-fifth birthday, on November 26, 1786, found him safely housed there, hardly attending to the dark, thick fog that hung around the house on account of the neatness and cosy comfort that reigned within doors. It was one of those days that were the heralds of Christmas, from which the poet of "The Task" knew how to extract so much that was pleasant and profitable; and, whether the days were wet or dry, the house was warm and comfortable.

"There is a man in the kitchen, sir, who desires to speak with you," said the person who acted as butler, footman, and gardener to the two inhabitants of Weston Lodge.

"What sort of a man is he, Sam?" asked his master.

* In the very interesting "Life of John Newton," by the Rev. Josiah Bull, grandson of Cowper's friend, the biographer settles conclusively the often mooted question of the poet's engagement to Mrs. Unwin. Mr. Bull quotes the following passage from Southey, and proves its error by an extract from "Newton's Diary," hitherto unpublished:—"Another cause, however, has been assigned for the return of Mr. Cowper's malady. It has been said that he proposed marriage to Mrs. Unwin; that the proposal was accepted and the time fixed; that prudential considerations were then thought to preponderate against it; and that his mind was overthrown by the anxieties consequent upon such an engagement. This I believe to be utterly unfounded; for that no such engagement was either known or suspected by Mr. Newton I am enabled to assert; and who can suppose that it would have been concealed from him?" This is unquestionably a mistake, although thus strongly put. Nothing, it is obvious, was more natural or becoming than a marriage between two persons thus providentially brought to reside with each other. Nor was there, as is perhaps generally supposed, any great disparity of years between Mr. Cowper and Mrs. Unwin. Now the editor of this volume is able to state that he has again and again heard his father say that Mr. Cowper and Mrs. Unwin were betrothed, and about to be married, when the melancholy return of Mr. Cowper's malady in 1773 prevented the accomplishment of their purpose; and, moreover, that it was Mrs. Unwin herself who made this statement to his grandfather. But what Mr. Newton has said in his unfinished sketch is even still more to the purpose, and must for ever settle this question. We copy from the original before us: "They were congenial spirits, united in the faith and hope of the gospel, and their intimate and growing friendship led them in the course of four or five years to an engagement for marriage, which was well known to me, and to most of their and my friends, and was to have taken place in a few months, but was prevented by the terrible malady which seized him about that time."

"A plain, decent, elderly man, sir, who gives his name as Cox, and says that he has trudged hither all the way from Northampton, desirous to speak with you."

"It must be a pressing matter that thus makes him undertake a walk of some fifteen miles. Show him in, Sam." And Sam presently returned, ushering the decent, elderly man into Cowper's study, which was also the dining-room.

"Pray be seated, sir," said Cowper, with his customary polite and gentle manner; "and let me know for what cause I am indebted for the honour of this visit, paid at the task of so long a walk."

"Sir," said the visitor, taking a seat, and clearing his throat, as though he were in his clerk's desk and about to commence his official duties—"sir, my name is Cox. I am clerk of the parish of All Saints, in Northampton; brother of Mr. Cox, the upholsterer. It is customary for the person in my office to annex to a bill of mortality, which he publishes at Christmas, a copy of verses. You will do me a great favour, sir, if you will supply me with one."

To this, Cowper replied, "Mr. Cox, you have several men of genius in your town; why have you not applied to some of them? There is a namesake of yours in particular, Cox the statuary, who, everybody knows, is a first-rate maker of verses. He, surely, is the man of all the world for your purpose."

"Alas, sir!" replied the Northampton parish clerk, "I have heretofore borrowed help from him; but he is a gentleman of so much reading that the people of our town cannot understand him."

Cowper could not but feel all the force of the compliment implied in this speech, and was almost ready to answer, "My good friend, they may find me unintelligible for the same reason." But, on asking him whether he had walked over to Weston on purpose to implore the assistance of his muse, and on the clerk's assuring him that he had done so, Cowper, as he afterwards testified to his cousin, Lady Hesketh, felt his mortified vanity a little consoled; and, pitying the poor man's distress, which appeared to be considerable, promised to supply him with what he wanted; and Mr. Cox took his leave, with many protestations of gratitude, and was shown out through the kitchen by Sam.

Cowper was not one to forget a promise, especially when it was to give gratuitous help to an inferior in rank and station. He soon wrote nine verses, one of which has made its mark and been often quoted:—

"Like crowded forest-trees we stand
And some are mark'd to fall;
The axe will smite at God's command,
And soon shall smite us all."

And though he headed his verses with a quotation from a Latin author—perhaps to show that he also was a gentleman of much reading, like Mr. Cox the statuary—yet he wound up his stanzas with lines that could be as easily understood by the people of Northampton as any preceding ones in his poem. They were these, and were presumed to be written by the brother of Mr. Cox the upholsterer:—

"So prays your clerk with all his heart,
And, ere he quits his pen,
Begs you for once to take his part
And answer all—Amen!"

This poem was sent off to Northampton by the waggon, which, as Cowper said, was "loaded in part with my effusions in the mortuary style." And he gaily exclaimed, "A fig for poets who write epitaphs upon individuals! I have written one that serves two hundred persons." He wrote five more of these poems to