

ling, boxing, leaping, hurling the discus, and gladiatorial combats, popular among them five-and-twenty centuries ago, is apparent to every one, and strikes the beholder with surprise.

The training of the *athletae* also among the Romans was a very prominent feature in government, because it tended to feed those energies which were necessary for deeds of high emprise. But the national games, both of the Etruscans, Grecians, and Romans were in many instances highly indecent, and all were tinctured in a greater or less degree with a species of refined savagery. The combats of the Roman gladiators were evidently kept up to gratify a morbid taste and a sanguinary appetite. The greatest possible excitement existed whenever these affairs were announced to "come off;" but how a nation famous in learning, arts, and arms, could coolly look on and thereby sanction such inhuman torture, is a problem which the moderns have yet to solve. A noble poet draws the following powerful picture of a gladiatorial combat:—

"And here the buzz of eager nations ran
In murmured pity or loud roar'd applause,
As man was slaughtered by his fellow man.
And wherefore slaughtered? Wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure."

I see before me the gladiator lie,
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low;
And through his side the last drops ebbing flow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder shower: and now
The arena swims around him—he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed
The wretch who won.

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away.
He reek'd not of the life he lost, nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play;
There was their Dacian mother—he their sire,
Butchered to make a Roman holiday."

The legalized sports of the British nation assume no such sanguinary aspect. Many of the diversions, popular centuries ago, and which had a demoralizing tendency, have for ever gone into desuetude; for the taste of society has outrun the remnants of feudal barbarism which characterized the sports of earlier days. If it be